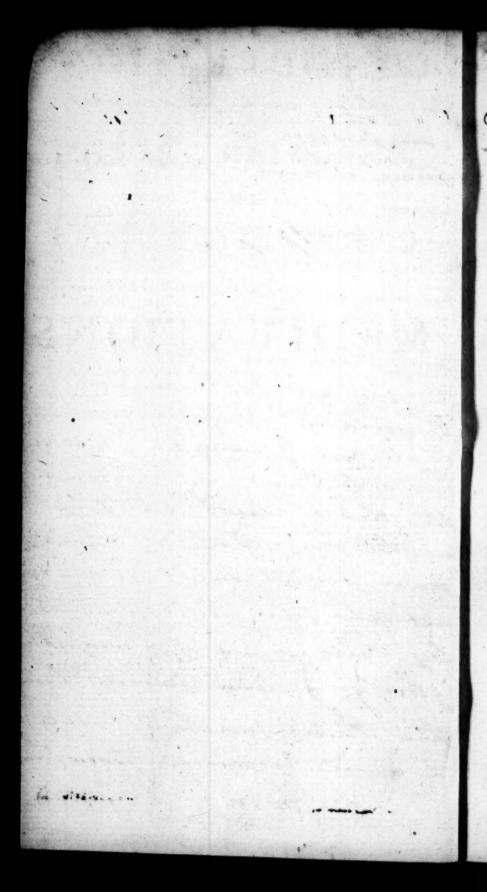
Almighty for whose graces From dence has particularly ordour the spirit of Machinety to wingst so safely through the timbulant Lea of this Worts to our Howon of bligs. Vouchouse; we bescech you so to dis hose your servants for this forenous Virtue, by making every day's charce experience of our own wicas neso and vanity, while our loft Sails, and lay flot on the garde all proud concerts of mostive that we suffer not our minds to be discom force with any papion nor our tongues to break forth in any violent expression, but always preserve ourselves en va a regular and even temper

the the work how it will about I 4 in, as becomes those whose head we proposed with the Joys of Heaven, and aft to feel in ere thing only the sweet empulse 2 of Hope and Charity through me for Jewes Prist they von, who with you and the Woly ghost 1 lives and rugues on God, Wall without end. Amen. V. Got whose gracious providence touchesofer us or frequent Monitor of our own and the horles last eno, my bunging every day in the detent grave of night. We most humbly besuch you to render familiar to our expectation shore tuble periors of time by our constant due use

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## CONSIDERATIONS

UPON THE

#### CHRISTIAN TRUTHS

C. a. Ferand AND Q. P.B. T.C.

#### CHRISTIAN DUTIES

Digested into

## MEDITATIONS

FOR EVERY DAY in the YEAR.

PART I.

For the first fix MONTHS.

Blessed is the man --- whose will is in the law of the Lord, and he shall meditate on his law day and night.

And he shall be like a tree, which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season.

And bis leaf shall not fall off, and all what soever be shall do, shall profeer, Psalm i. 1, 2, 3.

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James



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## CONSIDERATIONS

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## CHRISTLAN TRUTHS S.

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Here present thee with a set of Meditations. for every day in the year, collected from the word of God, and the writings of the Saints, and fervants of God. The fubicats are digefted in such manner as to take in the whole Christan doctrine, with all the mysteries and solemnities celebrated by the church throughout the year, and all the practical leffons of the Gospel. The great truths of the Christian religion are here briefly proposed, in their own plain native coulours: upon every fubject there are three confiderations, which may ferve to entertain the devout Christian for half an hour, or longer, according to the time he allows himself for the exercice of daily meditation: and every meditation is concluded with pious refolutions, which may determine the foul to decline with all her strength for the time to come, from all evil, and to dedicate herfelf in good earnest to the love and service of her Maker, by a serious application of all her powers to good.

the divine truths, let before As to the preparation, that ought always to be premised; to avoid needless repetitions, I have not markt it down, at the beginning of each meditations but must here put thee in mind, once for all, that thou must ever begin this exercice, by the faith and remembrance of the presence of God; and by humbly imploring his light, grace, and affiftance. Thou must also observe, that these confiderations are not defigned to be a matter of barren study, or speculation of the brain; but to be the feeds of pious affections in the heart: which affections are lookt upon by spiritual writers as the principal part of mental prayer; as tending directly to bring the foul to her God, and to unite her to him, by divine love. I have not fet down, upon each subject, all the various affections, that might be drawn from every confideration; as well because this would have been an endless work, and liable to frequent repetitions; as because these affections are usually taught, by a better mafter, viz. the Spirit of God, to all fuch as diligently frequent his school, which he holds, in the interiour of those fouls, that feriously exercise themselves prayer.

However, as it may be of some help to many, especially to beginners, I shall here point out the different kinds of affections, which may be excited in the soul, according to the different subjects of her meditations, and the degrees of her advancement in a spiritual life. Such are. 1. Acts of

a lively faith of the divine truths, fet before the foul in the confiderations; and a bowing down of all the powers of the foul to adore the fovereign Truth, that is thus pleafed to reveal himself to little ones. 2. Acts of fear of othe judgments of God; of his wrath enkindled against impenitent sinners; and of all the dreadful confequences of fin, and the punishments inflicted upon it, by divine justice, both in this world, and in the world to come. 3. Acts of hope, and confidence in the power, mercy, and goodness of God, represented in the meditation; in the fidelity of his divine promifes, made in favour of penitent finners; and in the inexhauftible treasures of merit and grace, purchased for us all, by the labours, fweat and blood of the Son of God. 4. Acts of the love of God, from the confider ration of the goodness of God in himself, of all his divine attributes, beauty and perfections; of his eternal love for us, and of all his benefits to us; and of the passion and death of his Son, for the love of us. 5. Acts of flame and confusion for our manifold fins, against his infinite goodness; and for our base ingratitude, by which we have returned fo much evil, for fo much good. 6. Acts of repentance and contrition for our fins; and of an humble accufation of them all, at the feet of Christ; of a horrour and hatred for them; and even a hatred of ourselves, for having been so base, and wicked; with earnest supplications for mercy, for what is past; and an offering of ourselves to a penitential life, for the time to come. 7. Acts

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74 Acts of adonation of the divine majefty of praise, and thanksgiving to him, for all his benefits: of invitation of all the Angels and Saints. and of all his works to glorify him; and of an ablation of our whole being, and of all that we have, to his glory. 8. Acts of joy in him, and of congratulation with him, that he is, what he is of zeal for the greater glory of his name, for the advancement of his kingdom, and the executing of his will; of defire that all the world may be converted to him; and that all may know him, love him, and ferve him. 9. Acts of humility, and contempt of ourselves; of embracing the cross, and of resignation to God's blesfed will in all things; and of a total dedication and confecration of ourselves to be the servants of his divine love. 10. Acts of desire to imitate the virtues of our dear Redeemer, of his bleffed Mother, and of all the Saints, to attend to his heavenly lessons; to imprint them deeply in our hearts; and to figh continually after him. 11. Acts of compassion for our Lord in his fulferings; with a great fense, of what he has endured for us; and of all the outrages, that are daily offered him by wilful finners. 12. Acts of a general flight, and abhorrence of all evil; and resolutions to embrace and follow all Christian virtues. Lastly, fervent petitions, and prayers, for the divine grace and affiftance, in from this application, by a thouland importanit lla

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THESE affections may also be exercised in the way of colleguies with our Lord, or with his faints. according to the exigence of the fubical former times treating with him, as with a parent other times as with a friend, or a fooufe other times as with our physician, representing to him all the maladies of our foul; at other times calling ourselves at his feet, like Magdalene, making a general confession of all our fins to him, as to our high-priest, and the true pastor of our fouls, &c. Ever representing him as near us; or rather as within us, and in the very center of our being; and treating with him, as we would do, if we faw him vifibly prefent with us: and ever concluding our addresses to him, with an oblation of our wholeselves to him, to execute all his wills. out dear Redeemer, of

As to the necessity of this holy exercice of meditation, and the great advantages of the daily practice of it; I shall refer thee to what thou shalt find below, under the heads of consideration, and mental prayer: and I shall only add here, that a diligence, in this exercice, is the great means to bring all good to the soul; and to conduct her safe to her Sovereign Good. The devil, who very well knows that such souls, as apply themselves seriously to mental prayer, will be not of his, makes all possible efforts to divert Christians from this application, by a thousand impostures, and to frighten them with phaatoms of imaginary

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difficulties to but this very opposition of his ought to convince us of the great importance of this exercice; and to make us more eager to purfue its in fpite of all his lyes and deceits. He pretends, the practice of mental prayer is not for all, but only for fuch as live in convents or colleges; that it requires wit and learning; and that the exercice of it is very difficult, &c. But all this is nothing but a delufion, 'tis all imposition and lies. Mental prayer, by the way of meditation, is very eafy, even to the meanest capacities; it requires nothing but a good will, and a fincere defire, of conversing with God, by thinking of him, and loving him. In effect, the great bufiness of mental prayer is thinking and loving: and who is there that can even live without thinking and loving? But then in mental prayer, the thinking and loving is not confined to fuch narrow limits, or mean objects, as the thoughts and affections of worldlings are, which lie always. groveling upon the earth: but it has an immense field, opened for it's entertainment, of great and everlasting truths, and such as are both highly moving, and of infinite importance to us all; and of great and eternal goods, together with the way to make them all our own.

As to the difficulty, objected to mental prayer, from the importunity of distractions, and the driness and indevotion, that many find therein: it must be allowed, that in order to make any progress in this exercice, the Christian must do his

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part, in removing the occasions of these diffractions as well by maintaining a purity of confeience; at by retrenching all inordinate affections to creat tures, (for where the treasure is there the treast and thought will be;) and by reftraining the mindt at other times, from idle and impertinent amufel ments, and from that continual distipation of thought, in which too many Christians pass their days. But then, for our comfort, where we endeavour to follow these rules; the involuntary diffractions, or driness, which we find in prayer, will not be imputed to us; nor hinder our prayer from being acceptable to God; and though less pleasant, highly advantageous to ourselves. And what matter is it, whether we please ourselves or no, provided we please our God, and do his will? This we may affure ourselves of, that if we continue faithfull in attending, as it were, daily upon him, by this exercice of mental prayer, in spite of all this driness, and opposition of the devil. and of our own weakness and corruption, we shall not fail of coming, sooner or later, to take of the excellent fruits, that ever grow upon this moving, and of infinite importance spil to sent

I shall add no more, by way of preface, but only beg of thee, resolutely to undertake, and constantly to persevere, in this heavenly exercice of mental prayer, in spite of the world, the sless, and the devil. What thou art seeking after is a treasure of infinite value: if it costs thee some pains in digging for it, it will abundantly recompense

penfe all thy labour. This exercice is the true Christian philosophy, consisting in the fearch, and love of true wisdom; even that wisdom, which is to much extolled by the Spirit of God, in holy writ; and which comes down from God, and carries us up to God: This is the science of the Saints.

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# ONSIDERATION

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CHRISTIAN TRUTHS, and CHRISTIAN DUTIES, OR MEDITATIONS

For every Day in the Year.

## January 1.

On New-Year's - DAY.

ONSIDER first, that on this day, we keep the octave of the birth of Christ, together with the estivity of his circumcisson; when being yet but eight lays old, he began to shed his facred blood, in obedience o his Father's will; fubjecting himself to that most ainful, and most humbling ceremony, and bearing theren the resemblance of a criminal, as if he, like the rest, ad flood in need of the circumcifing knife for the expition of fin. Christians learn here from your infant Saiour, the lessons he desires to teach you in his circumission: his unparallelled humility, his perfect obedience nd conformity to his Father's will, his patience in fufering, and his ardent love and charity for us. He came o discharge the immense debt we owed by our fins to is Father's justice, by shedding the last drop of his blood n expiation for them; and behold he has here given us n earnest of this payment, by submitting himself this day o the knife of circumcifion.

Confider 2dly, and fet before your eyesthis divine infant, his innocent lamb of God, this beloved of your fouls, eautiful beyond the children of men, all embrued in his wn most facred blood; and suffering in that tender age he cruel smart of a most sensible wound. O how sensible VOL. I.

indeed

indeed to him! O how fenfible to the loving heart of his bleffed Virgin Mother! See with what affection flie embraces him! See with what anguish of heart she bewails his fufferings! See with what tender compassion she frives to afford him all the comfort the is able! Learn of her the like affections of love and compassion for your fuffering Lord. O my foul, embrace with her thy infant Saviour, bleeding for thee. A bloody spouse art theu to me, faid Sephora to Moses, Exodus iv. 25 when to deliver him from the hand of the Angel that threatened him with death, fhe touched his feet with the blood of her child, whom the had just then circumcifed. O how truly is our dear Redeemer a sponsus sanguinum, a bloody spouse to our souls, for whom he gives now these first fruits of his blood, and for whom he will one day give all the his blood, to refeue us from the hand of the deftroying angel! O bleffed be his divine charity for ever!

Confider 3dly, that 'tis the duty of all Christians to imitate our Lord's circumcision, by a spiritual circumcising of the heart : which God fo often calls for in the scriptures; and always preferred before the carnal circum-co-cifion. This spiritual circumcision requires of us a cutting off, or retrenching, all disorderly affections to the the world and its pomps; to the mammon of iniquity, and to the flesh and its lusts; and a serious application of our fouls to a daily mortification of our passions, and corrup inclinations: my foul, let us heartily embrace, and dail

put in practice, this circumcifion of the heart.

Conclude to make a return of thy heart to thy infan Saviour, who began on this day to shed his blood for thee: but fee it be a heart purified by a spiritual circum cision, from all such affections as are disagreeable to him

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## January 2. and a start of the

On beginning a new life with the new year.

ONSIDER first, how many years of your life a now past and gone : how long it is fince you first can to the knowledge of good and evil: and in what many

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ou have spent all this precious time, given you for no other end but that you might employ it in the love and ervice of your God; and in securing the falvation of your immortal fouls. Alas! have any of these past years been spent in such a manner as to answer this great and? Is not that one and only bufiness for which you ame into this world still to be begun? Have not all these gears, which one after another have flowed away into the sulph of eternity, been utterly loft to your fouls? It is well if they have not: confidering how foon the greatest part of Christians, after their coming to the use of reason, fall from the grace of their baptism; how quickly they give hemselves up to follow the bent of their corrupt inclinations and passions: and in what a forgetfulness of God they generally pass their days. Ah! my soul, what a sad thing would it be, if, during all these years, thou hast hitherto lived, instead of storing up provisions for a happy eternity, thou hast been only treasuring up to thyself wrath, against the day of wrath?

Consider adly, the present state and condition of your conscience. What is your life at present? How stand accounts between your foul and God? What would you think, if this day you were to be called to the bar of diand vine justice? Should you not earnestly desire a delay?

Ou Alas! how sew live in the manner in which they would dail And yet they are not ignorant, that death generally comes when least expected; and that generally speaking as men nfar ive, fo they die. Ah! my foul, deceive not thyfelf, nor of for uffer thyfelf to be imposed upon by the enemy. him in all appearance will be much shorter than thou aft: it will certainly be so to many thousands, who expect it as little as thyself. Set then thy house in order now: begin this very day to rectify the whole state of thy interiour: and live hence-forward as thou desirest to die. There cannot be too great a security where etermity is at take.

Consider 3dly, that the mercy of God has borne with our for so many years past; and notwithstanding all the

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provocations of your repeated crimes, and perpetual ingratitude, has brought you now to the beginning of this new year, out of a fincere defire, that now at least you might begin a new life, and fuch a life as might fecure to your fouls that true life which never ends. You have been, alas! like the barren figtree, planted in his vineyard, which hitherto has brought forth nothing but leaves: but see, he is willing to try you once more, in hopes of your doing better, for the future, and to manure you a little while longer with his word, his graces, and his facraments. But O take care to disappoint him no more, an by refusing him the fruits he expects of a thorough a- fal mendment of life: lest he pass an irrevocable sentence, cic for the barren tree to be cut down, and cast into the fire.

Conclude to begin from this very hour, to turn away from fin; and to dedicate yourselves hence-forward in to good earnest to the love and service of your God. Alas how sew Christians seem to be truly in earnest in this do greatest of all concerns, where their all is at stake for lea tur compenses to more than tur and the second and the second and are greatered and

## January 3.

On the rules of a new life.

ONSIDER first, that in the epistle which is read out on New-Year's-Day, Titus ii. 11 --- 15, the Apodel steel has in a few words declared to us the rules we are to follow in our lives, in consequence of the Son of God's for coming amongst us: viz. what we are to renounce; to what we are to practise; what we are to look for; and what we are to tend to. The grace of God our Saviour, saith he, bath appeared to all men: instructing us, that vi. denying ungodlines and worldly desires, we should live so denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live foberly, and justly and godly in this world; looking for that he blessed hope, and the coming of the glory of that great God of and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us and that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and might necessarily to himself a people acceptable, a pursuer of god from works

every Day in the Year.

works O how many great lessons are here contained in a few words! Let us reflect on them one after another.

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Consider therefore, 2dly, the end for which our God and Saviourcame down amongst us, by the mystery of his Incarnation; enlightened us by his Gospel and by his life; and at length offered himself in sacrifice for us, by his death upon the cross. He gave himself for us, saith the Apostle, that he might redeem us from all iniquity: by setting us at liberty from being slaves to Satan, sin, and hell: by breaking in sunder all the chains of our vices and passions; and by purchasing all mercy, grace and salvation for us; to the end that, by the virtue of his precious blood, he might cleanse us for himself, and make us an acceptable people, (a chosen generation, a kingly priest-hood, a holy nation, I Peter ii. 9.) a zealous pursuer of all way good works. See Christians what kind of men we ought to be, in consequence of what the Son of God has done for us, in coming down from heaven for us, and laying this down his life for us. O let us never more degenerate by for leading lives unworthy of him! Let us never more return to our former flavery.

Consider 3dly, that being purchased by the Son of God with so great a price, we are to consider ourselves hence-forward as his property; and therefore we must not pretend to dispose of ourselves, any otherwise than according to his will and pleasure. This ought to be our rule in all we do; this we ought to consult in all our deliberations; this holy will of him that has bought us with his own blood, should be in every thing a law to us; sod's so as ever to renounce all that we know to be displeasing to him; and ever to pursue with all our strength, what and we know to be agreeable to him. You are not your own: that vi. 19, 20. Glorify, and bear God in your body.

Conclude to take in practice for the rule of your life, this

Conclude to take in practice for the rule of your life, this about holy will of your Redeemer, according to the whole extent God of the Apostle's exposition and declaration of the Christier us an's rule, Titus ii. 11. &c. and you will be religious men night indeed, of that excellent order which Jesus Christ came god from heaven to institute; and you will be with him for devas.

#### MEDITATIONS for

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On what we are to renounce by the Christian's rule.

ONSIDER first, that in consequence of our redemption through Jesus Christ, we are bound by the tenour of our rule above rehearfed, to deny, that is to renounce, all ungodliness, and worldly desires, and to be clean from all iniquity: we are to turn away from all evil; but more especially from the evils here named: the first of which is ungodliness; which is usually the first crime we commit, and the fource of all the rest. by ungodliness we understand, either the giving away from God what belongs to him, or the refusing him the service and love which we owe him. Now here the finner ufually begins his revolt. He is indispensibly obliged to dedicate himself to God from his first coming to the use of reason, instead of which, like the apostate angels, he turns himself away from him, he refuses him his heart, which he fo justly claims, and gives it away to empty toys and lying follies. This is ungodliness; this is a kind of idolatry, in preferring the creature before the Creator; this is the fource of innumerable evils; this is the very bane of the world. O let us renounce it, and detest it!

Confider 2dly, what those baits are which Satan usually employs to draw us away from God; for no man ever chooses to serve the devil for his own fake, or for any love he has for him: but the tempter fets before us the deceitful appearances of some worldly honour, profit, or pleasure; and with these he allures deluded mortals to his fervice: these are the gilded pills with which he poifons the foul: thefe are his treacherous baits which hide the hook, with which he draws millions into hell. Therefore the Christian's rule requires that, together with ungadliness, he should also deny all worldly desires; that is, all affections to those worldly toys, and cheating vanities; as the most effectual means of disarming Satan, and hindering him from having any hold at all of us. For when we despise all that he can offer, and even fly and abhor

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nd can do no more.

Consider 3dly, that these worldly lusts and desires, which the Christian must renounce, are, in particular, hose of which the beloved disciple writes, I John ii. I 6. Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Fa-, her (the love of God) is not in him: for all that is in he world, is the concupifcence of the flesh, and the concuiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life. 'Tis on account of this triple concupiscence, which reigns in all places, that he whole world, as the same Apostle tells us (chap.v.19.) s feated in wickedness: so that if we defire to belong to Christ in good earnest, and to profess ourselves religious inder his rule. we must declare a perpetual war against his triple concupiscence, and its abettors, viz. the world. and our corrupt nature: and then we may despise all the levils in hell. Yes, Christians, renounce but these three capital enemies of your fouls, viz. the love of fenfual pleafures, the love of gratifying the covetous eye with worldly toys, and the love of worldly honour and windy pride; and you shall be clean from all iniquity.

Conclude to be ever zealous observers of your rule, by denying ungodliness, and worldly desires: and turn your hearts to feek your happiness in other kinds of honours, iches and pleasures; which the world cannot give, and

which may stay with you for ever.

# tylifanuary 5. seeded a vol var

On what lives we are to lead by the Christian's rule.

ONSIDER first, that by our rule above-rehearfed, we are not only to decline from all evil, n confequence of our God and Saviour's coming amongst as, but we are also to do good: we are not only to deny ingodliness, and worldly defires; but also to live soberly, and justly, and godly in this world: that we may walk worthy of him, who has given himself for us, not only hat he might redeem us from all iniquity; but also that he might

might chanse us for himself, and make us an acceptable people, a pursuer of good works. The Christian's duty, by his rule of life, has three branches: one of them relates to the regulating of himself; another regards his neighbours, but the third, and chiefest of all, relates to his God. All these we comply with, if we live soberly, and justly, and godly: because by living soberly, we keep ourselves in perfect order: by living justly, we behave ourselves to our neighbours in all things, as we ought; and by living godly, we dedicate our whole lives to God.

Confider 2dly, the great extent of these three branches of the Christian's duty; and how much this sobriety, this puffice, and this godliness requires of us. Christian sobriety does not only exclude intemperance in eating and drinking, but also all other excesses and disorders, that may any ways carry us out of the bounds of Ariet regularity: fo that to be truly fober, we must restrain pride by humility, anger by meekness, lust by purity, and all the irregular motions of our passions and disorderly inclinations, by fuch a general temperance and moderation, as may maintain the whole man in a due decorum, both as to foul and body. And this Christian fobriety, keeps'us, as to ourselves, in perfect order, harmony, and peace. Christian justice regulates our whole conduct as to our neighbours, by that golden rule of doing as we would be done by: and, in consequence of this, excludes every thought, every judgment, or cenfure, every word or discourse, every action, or dealing, that may any ways tend to his prejudice or disadvantage, and by this means, as much as lies in us, we maintain due order, harmony, and peace with all our neighbours. And laftly, true godliness makes us feek God in all things, and above all things; and confecrates all our powers and faculties to his love and fervice; by the means of recollection, meditation, and continual prayer; and thus we maintain a perpetual peace with God. So that the complying with these three branches of our duty, makes us truly wife, and truly perfect, and establishes the peace of God in our souls.

Confider 3dly, that, according to the words of the Apostle in the place above quoted, whilst we labour

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y living foberly, justly, and godly in this world; we nust not confine our views to the narrow limits of this hort life here below; but we must be ever looking forward towards the great object of the Christian's hope, iz. the blessed and glorious coming of our God and Saliour Jesus Christ, when he shall come to accomplish he great work he has begun in us, and to take us some with him, both in soul and body, to our true country; and there make us his eternal kingdom. On how happy are those souls that are always aspiring after this coming of their Lord; and bewailing in the mean time the long continuance of their banishment here, and their great distance from him, in this foreign and!

Conclude to begin at least now, with this new year, to enter upon the true paths of life, by a general sobriety, justice and godliness; and to strive to advance daily, by large steps, in this happy way, which leads to that life, which never ends.

### January 6.

#### On the EPIPHANY.

Consider R first, that this day is kept by the church of God, with great solemnity, as one of the principal sessivals of the year; and is called the Epiphany, that is to say, the apparition or manifestation of our Lord: because on this day, he was first made known to the Gentiles, viz. to the wisemen of the East; who were conducted to him, by the apparition of an extraordinary star, and inspired to pay their early homage and worship to him. O how just it is that we should all celebrate with a grateful devotion, this day of our first calling to the knowledge, and faith of Christs this Christmass day of the Gentiles! O my soul, how great is this benefit of thy vocation to the true Christian saith! what would all other savours, or advantages either of nature, or of grace have availed thee, if this had been

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been wanting? how miserable must thou have been both for time and eternity, if, like millions of others, thou hadft been left to fit in darkness, and in the shadow death! O bless him then both now and for ever, who without any defert on thy part, has brought thee to his

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admirable light!

Consider 2dly, the wonderful ways of divine Providence; as well in preparing beforehand both the Jews and Gentiles, to expect about that time the coming of the great Messiah; as in giving an early notice of his birth both to the Jews and the Gentiles: to the Jews by an Angel sent to the shepherds; to the Gentiles by the star, that appeared to the wisemen of the east. But alas! how few either of the one, or the other, duly corresponded with this great call! and is not this the case of millions to this day, who tho' many ways called and invited by, and to, that light which enlighten-eth every man that cometh into this world, John i. choose rather to remain in the darkness of insidelity, error, or vice; than to follow the conduct of that star, that his would bring them to the true light? O how clearly the shall we see one day, that there was nothing wanting who on the part of divine Providence to bring us all to the himself, but that we have been generally so unhappy, wa

himself, but that we have been generally so unhappy, wa as to be wanting in our correspondence with his lights and calls!

Consider 3dly, that this star, which gave notice of the birth of our Saviour, was seen by all the nations of that the East: but that the generality contented themselves with gazing upon it, without taking any pains to seek him, whom that star preached unto them: whilst the wisemen, following this divine call, set out without delay, in quest of this new-born king: in consequence of which, these were happily brought to Christ, and to his admirable light; whilst those others remained in darklehmes, and died in their insidelity. See my soul the difference between a ready compliance with the inspirations and graces of God, and the neglect of these heavenly wheals: a difference, which, as it produces here the difficultion of the saint, and the sinner; so will terminate by herehereeen,

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ereafter in a happy eternity, for fuch as follow God nd his calls; and a miferable eternity for fuch as neglect nem. Ah finners dread the consequences of neglecting he calls of heaven! God will not be mocked.

Conclude to be ever attentive to all those gracious ghts and inspirations, by which you are invited to leave he ways of iniquity, and to come and follow Christ. las! how many of these stars have you hitherto nelected? Arise now at least, and set out by the guidance f this divine light, that you may make the best of your vay home, from those husks of swine to your Father's ouse. It is not yet too late.

### theing ton enone Fanuary 7.

#### On the Wisemen's journey to Bethlehem.

ONSIDER first, that the wisemen, were no fooner informed by the apparition of this extraor-that linary star, of the birth of the great king that was to that he hary star, of the birth of the great king that was to arly rule the world; but they set out to seek him in Judea where they understood, by an ancient tradition, and by the prophesy of Balaam, Numb. xxiv. 17, that he that the popy, was denoted by that star should be born. And as it was natural for them to expect to hear news of him in Jerusalem, the capital city of Judea; they went thither to enquire after him: where is he, say they, Matt. ii. 2, that is born king of the fews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to adore him. But as his king-seek dom was not of this world; but was to be established, the upon other kind of soundations, than any mortal emthe upon other kind of foundations, than any mortal em-de-pire, in the immortal fouls of his people; and that upon the ruins of worldly pride, and of all the pomps of Satan; he chose for his birth the humble stable of Beth-lehem, before any of the stately palaces of Jerusalem; as being more agreeable to his kingdom, the kingdom of humility and truth. O how happy are those souls whose eyes are always open to this heavenly truth, and shut to wordly vanity and lies! how happy they, who happy conforming in practice to these maxims of this great king, king,

king, become themselves his kingdom; even that king

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in which he shall reign for ever!

Consider 2dly, how king Herod was troubled, at hearing of the birth of this new king, and fo was all Jerusalem with him: in which they were a figure of all fuch fouls as are fo wedded to this cheating world, and its lufts, as to be more afraid of parting with them, than of losing an eternal kingdom; and therefore they are troubled and diffurbed, when they are summoned by the messengers of heaven to arise, and leave these toys, to go and feek after Christ: and they even strive to Affle the heavenly infant, that would gladly be born in their fouls; by smothering those lights and graces in that offer to conduct them to him. O how much more happy were the dispositions of the wise men, who were no willing at any rate to find Ghrist; and who gladly he fought and embraced the directions of those that by about the directions of those that by their office were qualified to point him out to them? the But alas! how miserable were those priests and scribes, who whilst they directed the wisemen to our Savious took no pains to seek him themselves! see my soul, this never be thy case.

Consider 3dly, how the wisemen, in their way from sea Jerusalem to Bethlehem, were again favoured with the sut sight of the star; which both conducted them to Bethlehem, and pointed out to them the place where our saviour was. This heavenly light filled their hearts with exceeding great joy; and going in, they found him whom their souls desired, and they paid their homage to him. O how precious, how lovely, how desirable is that light, that conducts the soul to Christ! O what joy, what delight it is to the soul to see herself draw not near to her God, her sovereign good! but then this lieavenly manna is not usually given, but to them that sight, and that conquer all the labours, difficulties and he oppositions, that they meet with in the way to Christ, and who, like the wisemen, are quite in earnest in seeking him. Happy they that sollow this great example im Happy they that taste, and see, how sweet the Lord is to them that seek, and find him! - Conclude bu g

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Conclude to imitate the wifemen, first, in their ready ompliance with the divine call; 2dly in their diligence inquiring after Christ: and 3dly, in their perseverance; nd then you may confidently expect, like them to find pur Lord, and to rejoice in him, and disconnectional fuch four as are for wedned to this contribe world,

# January 8.

On the faith and offerings of the wisemen.

ONSIDER first the strong and lively faith of the wisemen: they set out with expectation of finding n infant king, attended with that state and pomp, which ras fuitable with the dignity of one that was born to be nonarch of the universe: and behold instead of this hey meet with nothing but poverty and humility; a abe wrapt in fwadling cloaths, and laid in a manger; ttended only with a poor maid, and an humble tradefwas more fully instructed in the qualities of him, whom hey had been seeking for with so much labour: and herefore they were not shocked with those mean apthe out under this poor and humble equipage, believed and ethiodored their king, their God, and their Saviour. Of our ow happy are those souls whose faith takes no scandal earts of the at the crib, or the cross of Christ, but rather knits them so much the more closely to him, by how much able Confider 2dly, how the wifemen having found our

what ord, immediately fell down prostrate before him, had not worshipped him; professing by this humble and this ubmissive posture of the body, the profound reverence that not adoration of their souls. Do we imitate them by aft he like humility, reverence, and adoration when frish we appear before the fame Lord in prover? After feek his homage, they opened their stores; and made him their offerings, of gold, frankincense, and myrrh; at a figurify by the quality of these their gifts, their him him, to whom they gave them; they presented that the bull of the characteristics. him with their gold, as a tribute due to him, as their king: they offered him their frankincense, (which was used in the divine worship) as to their God, and they gave him their myrrh, (which was used in the burial of the dead) as to a mortal man, who came to redeem all mankind by his death. O let us, by their example, daily offer him our best homages, in all these qualities, as our king, as our God, and as our Redeemer!

Consider 3dly, that the wisemen having found Christ, were admonished from heaven not to return any more to Herod; and so went back another way to their own country: to teach us, that after finding Christ, we must return no more to his, and our enemies, Satan and fin; but must make the best of our way to our true country, by a quite different road from that by which we came away from it. Our true country is Paradife: we came away from this our country, by pride, by difobedience, by the love of these visible things, and by gratifying our fenfual appetite with the forbidden fruit. We must take quite another road, if we hope to return thither again: it must be by penitential tears, by humility, by despising these visible things, by restraining our fensual appetite, by wholesome mortifications of the flesh, and other felfdenials, and by a constant obedience, that we are to find the way back to our true home.

Conclude to quit the broad road, of gratifying thy passions and sensual pleasures; and to pass over to the narrow way of penance and felfdenial; and thou shalt be brought fafely back to thy true country, and to thy

Father's house.

# January 9.

Of the offerings we are to make, by the example of the wisemen.

CONSIDER, first, that the gold, frankincense, and myrrh, offered by the wifemen to our newborn Saviour, mystically denote other offerings, which we also ought daily to make to him. In the first place, we mult

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must offer him the tribute of our gold, as to our true king; that is, we must daily present him with our souls, stampt with his own image, and burnished with divine love. This is the gold, this is the tribute our Sovereign expects from us. When the Jews asked him concerning their giving tribute to Cesar, he called for their coin, in which they had the image of Cesar; and inferred from thence, that they were to render to Cesar the things that were Cesar's, (Matt. xxii.) that is, to give him what was stampt with his image. Our souls are stampt with God's own image, to this very end, that we should give them in tribute to him, by perfect love: render then to God the things that are God's; by daily offering your whole souls up to him, by fervent acts of love; and you shall have given him your gold.

Consider 2dly, that we must also offer our frankincense to our Saviour, as to our God. Incense in scripture is considered as an emblem of prayer; and expresses the worship we pay to our Lord, by sending up to him the odoriferous vapours of our devotions, as from the censar of a heart, burning with the love of God. Prayer then is the frankincense, which we must, in imitation of the wisemen, present to our Saviour, as to our God. This we must daily offer, to him at the hours of incense, as a morning and evening sacrifice, in the temple of God, which is within our souls: with this, we ought also to endeavour to persume in some measure all our other daily actions and employments in order to make

them agreeable to him.

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Consider 3dly, that with these offerings of the gold of divine love, and of the frankincense of fervent prayer, we must also join that of the myrrh of selfdenial, and mortification, which our Lord no less expects, and requires at our hands, than the other two: since he has so expressly declared, that except we deny ourselves and hate ourselves in this world, we cannot be his disciples. Myrrh has a bitter taste, but it is a wholesome bitter: and it has an excellent property to keep bodies from corruption. Thus it is an emblem of the mortification of our passions and sensual inclinations; which is some-

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what bitter indeed and disagreeable to the taste of our nature; but is fovereignly wholesome; and necessary to keep the foul from the corruption of fin. So that this offering of myrrh, like the other two, should be the daily exercise of a Christian; and should as it were feason all his thoughts, words, and deeds, to reftrain them from evil.

Conclude, O my foul, not to let a day pass without frequently offering to thy Lord, the gold of love and charity, the frankincenfe of prayer, and the myrrh of felfdenial; and he will certainly accept of both thy offerings and thyfelf; and in exchange he will give thee

himself.

#### January 10.

On the gospel of the sunday within the Octave of the EPIPHANY.

ONSIDER, first, how Jesus, Mary, and Jofeph, went every year up to Jerusalem, to the temple of God, upon the solemn festivals; notwithstanding their poverty and their living at the distance of three days journey from Jerusalem: and there they employed the weeks appointed for the feafts, in affifting at the publick worship, praises, and facrifices, which were offered to God in the temple at those times. Christians, learn from this great example, the diligence with which you ought to affift at the publick worship of God, upon festivals. Learn not to suffer every trisling difficulty to . hinder your attendance in God's temple on those days; when neither the length, nor the charges, either of the journey, or of the stay they were to make in Jerusalem, could keep this holy family from a constant observance of these times dedicated to God. But O who can worthily apprehend the dispositions of soul, with which they entered upon these journeys; their recollection on the road, their heavenly conversation in Jerusalem; their profound adoration, their enflamed love, their fervent

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Prayer and devotion, in the temple! let us strive to

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Confider 2dly, how when Jesus was twelve years old, and they had gone up, according to their custom, to keep the solemn feast of the Pasch in Jerusalem, after the days of the folemnity were fulfilled, when they returned, our Saviour withdrew himself from them, and staid behind them in the city. They innocently thinking him to be in the company, went one days journey homewards without him, and then not finding him, were struck with unspeakable grief and concern for their los; the more because they apprehended, lest by some fault of theirs, they might have driven him away from them. Ah! what anguish must it be to a soul, that is fensible of the treasure she possesses, when she has Jesus with her, to find that he has withdrawn himself from her, and that she has lost her treasure. But how much more must this blessed couple have resented the loss of their Jesus; whose love for him was much greater than can be expressed or imagined? For in proportion to their love, their forrow also must have been beyond expression great. Learn from hence, my foul, what value thou oughtest to set upon the happiness of having Jesus with thee; and how much thou oughtest to regret the loss of him.

St. Joseph had lost their Jesus, as to his sensible presence; yet they had not lost him, as to the presence of his grace and love; they had him still very near to them, because they had him in their hearts. A lesson for Christians of good-will, not to be discouraged, nor to give themselves up to excessive anguish, if sometimes they experience the like substractions of the sensible presence of our Lord, by a drynessim their devotions, and a spiritual desolation: let them but take care to keep their heart, and will with him; and they may be assured he is not far from them. He has often dealt thus with the greatest Saints; and to their advantage too: to keep them more humble, and distrustful of them.

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felyes; and to teach them not to feek their own fathfaction, in the milk of spiritual consolations, but to be content to feed their souls with the more solid diet of conformity to the will of God, and to the cross of Christ.

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Conclude to take care not to drive away Jesus by wilful sin: and be assured that nothing else can ever

Separate him from thee.

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On seeking Jesus when be has been lost by Sin:

ONSIDER first, how great an evil it is to lofe lefus by wilful fin. Ah! tis a far greater los than if we should lose the whole world besides; for in losing him we lose our all. This loss is the greatest misery that can befall any foul on this side of eternity: it wants nothing but eternity to make it held And yet how common is this los? How often - is Jesus lost in this manner, even in our most asolemn festivals, by the abuse of these holy times? And how is it possible that a Christian foul should admit of any manner of comfort, joy, or pleasure, under so great a · loss? What then must they do that have reason to apprehend they have thus loft their Jesus; and that he is now no longer theirs; and they no longer his? They must learn from the Blessed Virgin, and St. Joseph, how they are to feek him, and find him again prior though this bleffed couple had not doft him, in that wretched way, yet the manner in which they fought him, may be an inftruction to all others to teach them by what means Jesus may be found again when he is teek him there by myard recolled or loft.

St. Joseph were no sooner sensible that they had lost Jesus, but they began to seek him without the least delay; and they gave themselves no rest till they had sound him again: to teach us, that there ought to be

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no manner of delay in feeking him, as foon as ever we perceive we have loft him; and how much we ought to refent fo difmal a lois. They made no flay in the place where they were; but haftened back to Jerufalem, to find him there; not enduring to remain for ever fo fhort a time at a diffance from him ; to teach as to spare no pains either night or day, in seeking him, and in using all means in our power, to come at him. They fought him forrowing, that is, with their fouls full of grief and anguish, through the sense they had of the loss of their beloved; to teach us, that the true way to find Jesus when lost, must be by a forrow influenced with love; that is, by a contrite and humble heart. They fought him with perfeverance, and did not give over their fearch, till they had effectually found him; to teach us not to defift, upon meeting with difficulties, and oppositions, in our search after Jesus, but to go on, with diligence, till we recover his gracious company.

Confider 3dly, that Jesus was not found by the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, among ft their kindred and acinvaintance. Alas I he is too often loft in the company and conversation of our worldly friends; but is very feldom to be found there. The common conversation of the world is at the best but empty, worldly, and diftracting; and 'tis out of fashion to speak, or think, of Jesus in the company of worldlings. Therefore the foul that would effectually find him, must withdraw as much as may be from worldly company, and must enter into a kind of spiritual retreat; she must make the best of her way by spiritual reading, meditation and prayer, to the temple of God in Jerusalem; or rather she must make a temple for her Jesus within her own self, and feek him there by inward recollection. 'Tis the fureit place to find him in. O finners, return to your own hearts, and you will quickly find your God, When you went aftray from him, you went aftray also from your own hearts, and from your inward house; you forgot at the same time both God and yourselves. ReMEDITATIONS for

20 turn home to your interiour, and you shall recover them

both again sin or holm

Conclude, if at any time you have reason to apprehend that you have lost Jefus, to withdraw immediately from the crowd, to feek him in his temple in your own litteriour; and to give yourselves no rest till you have found him there. There he will hear you; and there he will teach you.

#### erate best year they but daying fanuary 12.

On the leffons our Lord Jesus gives us in his pri-Amstoda San Burin vate life.

ONSIDER first, those words spoken by our Lord Jesus to his parents, when they found him in the temple, in the midft of the doctors, hearing them, and asking them questions, Luke ii. Did you not know, faid he, that I must be about my Father's business? He came down from heaven, not to do his own will, but the will of him that fent him, John. iv. 38. This was his daily food, during his mortal life. My meat, faid he, is to do the will of bim that fent me. John iv. 34. This then was the exercise of his private life; which he spent in obscurity, and retirement, under a poor carpenter's roof. He was all the while about the business of his Father. He was ever doing the will of his Father. All his thoughts and words, all his actions and omissions, were directed to his Father's glory. And this is the great lesson we are to learn from him in his private life. We all of us, like him, came into this world for nothing else but to do the will of God: we all of us ought to be ever about the business of our heavenly Father; all our thoughts, words, actions, and omiffions, ought to be directed to him. O let us study well this great lesson, which the Son of God employed fo many years in teaching!

Confider 2dly, how he went down with Joseph and Mary to Nazareth, and was subject to them, Luke ii. 51. O stand assonished my soul, to see the Lord and maker

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heaven and earth, submitting himself to his creatures, nd obedient to them! O see how he serves them even n the meanest offices; how he works, with his reputed ather, at his mechanic trade. But with what modefly nd filence, with what recollection and application of is foul to his heavenly Father by continual adoraon, thankfgiving, oblation, and love, and by continual rayer and interceffion for us? Christians, learn from his great example, to be ever humble, meek, and obeient. Learn to fanctify your ordinary employments, ud even your common actions, by recollection and nental prayer. Learn that even the highest perfection may be found in the exercise of the lowest and meanest offices; if in these the soul do but take care to keep lose to her God, and to embrace him by love.

Confider 3dly, what is written of our Lord, with reation to this private part of his life. That Jesus inreased in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men, Luke ii. 52. Our Lord, who from the first moment of his conception, was full of all heavenly wisdom and livine grace, was pleased in proportion to his advancing n age, to shew forth every day more than other in his words and actions, the admirable treasures of wisdom and grace that were hidden in his foul: to teach us to make a continual progress in the way of God; and to dvance every day by large steps, from virtue to virtue, ill we come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ, Eph. iv. 13. Christians, to we feriously apply ourselves to learn this excellent, esson? What progress have we hitherto made, after so many years pretending to walk after Jesus Christ in the way of virtue? Have we not for the most part rather gone backward than forward? O let us now at least begin to be in earnest!

Conclude to learn of our Saviour all those lessons which he defires to teach us in his private life: partifularly these three, 1. To be ever about the business of our Father. 2. To be ever submissive and obedient to

his vice-gerents, and 3. To be ever making the best of our way to him.

#### January 13.

On our Saviour's being baptised by St. John the
Baptist.

CONSIDER first, how St. John the Baptist, being sent as a fore-runner of our Lord, to prepare the people for him, by preaching to them penance, and a thorough conversion from their fins; when a multitude of publicans and other finners reforted to him, and were baptifed by him in the Jordan, confessing their fins, and receiving from him the rules of a new life: Our Lord Jesus also came among them, as if he had been one of their number, and stood in need of that baptism of penance for the remission of sins; and defired to be baptifed by him. Admire the humility of this Lamb of God, who came to take away the fins of the world; and yet here affociates himself with sinners, and is willing to pass for one of them. The Baptist was astonished at it, and refused to baptise him, saying; I ought to be baptifed by thee, and comest thou to me? But Jesus insisted upon his doing it: for so it becometh us, said he, to fulfill all justice, (Matt. iii. 14, 15.) that is to exercise, and to give examples of all virtues; amongst which humility is the foundation, which fustains all the rest. O give us thy grace, dear Lord, that we also may fulfill all justice, by the imitation of thy humility.

Consider 2dly, how our Lord Jesus, having thus humbled himself, to fulfill all justice, was presently exalted by his heavenly Father; when being baptised and praying, heaven was opened: and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, as a dove, upon him, and a voice came from heaven: Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased, Luke iii. 21, 22. Learn from hence, my soul, that humility opens heaven, and conducts us to God, and to all good. But see, also, how upon this occasion of the baptism of Christ, the chief mysteries of religion

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re displayed : fee how the whole Bleffed Trinity mania efts itself; the Father by his voice from heaven; the on in his human nature, assumed for us; and the Hoy Ghost by descending in the shape of a dove. See ow the mission, and the whole Gospel of Jesus Christ, s here folemnly authorized, with a formal declaration f the dignity of his person, and of his unction and conecration by the Spirit of God: fee how the Son of God. descending into the waters, sanctifies them, in order to hose great effects of regeneration and renovation of the oul, in the laver of baptism: see how he buries as it were the old Adam here, under the waters, and brings him forth a new man; opening heaven in his favour, and imparting to him both his holy Spirit, and the itle and dignity of Son of God. O let us veneate these heavenly mysteries! let us here embrace our

humble Saviour, the fource of all our good.

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Confider 3dly, how our Lord began the functions of his mission, and the preaching of his Gospel, from this ime of his being baptized; and his being here folemny recommended to the world; not only by the repeated estimonies of St. John Baptist, but by the voice of his heavenly Father, and by the visible descent of the Holy Ghost. But first, for our instruction, he was pleased, by way of preparation, to withdraw himself from the conversation of men, into a lonesome wilderness, and here to employ forty days in fasting and prayer; at the end of which time he suffered three different assaults of temptation from Satan; and after overcoming this wicked enemy, was vifited and ferved by Angels. Chrifians, let us learn from this great example, in all our piritual undertakings, to feek first the affistance and pleffing of heaven, by retirement, fasting, and prayer: et us learn, that these same are also the best arms against all the temptations of the enemy: that we are well not to exfpect, how much foever we are retired from he world, to live without temptations; fince Christ rod, nimself was tempted, and tempted in the desart; but hat we must, by his example, fight and overcome; gion and

and that this is the way to heavenly comforts here, and to an immortal crown hereafter.

Jesus, in every step he takes; and to have thy eye always upon him; that thou mayst copy out his virtues in thy life.

#### January 14.

On the sacred name of Jesus.

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For the first Sunday after the Octave of the EPIPHANY.

ONSIDER first, these words of the Apostle, Philip. ii. spoken of the eternal Son of God, incarnate for us: He humbled himself becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in beaven, on earth, and under the earth; and that every tongue sould confels, that the Lord Jefus Christ is in the glory of God the Father. Christians, let us then venerate this sacred name, and all the myfteries and heavenly truths it contains; which are so many, and so great, that no tongue can sufficiently express them, nor heart conceive them. The name of Jesus came from heaven: it signifies a Saviour; but fuch a Saviour, as should deliver his people from their fins; reconcile lost man to God; purchase for him mercy, grace, and salvation, and of a slave of Satan, and a child of hell, make him a Son of God, and heir of heaven. O what has not our Lord Jesus done, what has he not fuffered that he might be fuch a Jesus to us! none but he could ever fulfil the import of this heavenly name: none but a God-man, an Emmanuel, that is, a God with us, could be a Jesus to save his people from their fins, and be to them a never-failing fource of all true good; even to that degree as to make them in a manner partners in his divinity. Con-

fource

Confider 2dly, that the name of Jesus is a name of virtue and of power: in this name the churches of God were planted throughout the earth. In this name the Apostles wrought all kind of miracles, and even raisel the dead to life. By this name millions of martyrs have This name has peo? overcome death in all its shapes. oled the defarts with holy folitaries; and every nation of the christian world, in every age, with innumerable faints, who looking upon Jesus the author and finisher of their faith, have, through his name, overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, and are now set down with Jesus in his throne, according to the promise he has made to them that conquer in his name, Rev. iii. 21. To this facred name fo many mighty monarchs have vielded themselves captives; submitting both themselves and their kingdoms to this great conqueror; and oftentimes leaving even their crown and scepter for the love of this divine name. O kingdom of Jesus, kingdom of mercy and grace, when wilt thou extend thy conquests over all the universe; and bring all kings and people, all na tions and all hearts, to bow down, to embrace, and to give all praise and glory to this adorable name?

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Consider 3dly, that the name of Jesus carries with it in unfocakable majefty, tempered with humility, meekhels, fweetness, and love; inasmuch as it expresses to is a God made man, even a poor, meek and humble man; ut of a pure love for us. It shews forth to us all the livine attributes, stooping, as I may fay, to the work of our redemption, in order to raise us up from the dungfill, and to bring us to a heavenly kingdom. Fefus is name of mercy, a name of comfort, a name of grace nd falvation: it promifes pardon and forgiveness to all enitent finners; it preaches to them deliverance from heir flavery, and from their bonds; the discharge of all heir debres, the healing of all their maladies; and the efening them fromball their enemies, and from the with to come. It supports the Christian pilgrim under his labours of it comforts him in all his afflictions; is his rofuge in all dangers; it fets before him the fource of all his good; it encourages him to pray with an assurance that there is nothing but what he may obtain if he prays in the name of his Saviour. It puts to flight all the powers of hell; they cannot bear that sacred name. It conquers the world and the flesh; in fine, it opens heaven to all its true lovers and followers. O facred name, mayst thou be always in our hearts, and in our mouths! It was so with the blessed Apostle St. Paul: O may we like him, find all things in Jesus!

Conclude ever to venerate the divine name of Jesus, as presenting to your souls the principal object of the Christian's faith; the strongest grounds of his hope; and the chiefest motive, and most powerful attractive, to engage his love: viz. a God incarnate, and crucified for us. Thus may you exercise, as often as you hear this sacred name, all the three theological virtues, of

faith, hope, and love of God.

#### January 15.

On our Lord's changing water into wine, at the marriage-feast of Cana, St. John ii.

CONSIDER first, those words of the Gospel.
There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited, and his disciples. Happy marriage which our Lord was pleased to honour with his presence, and with his first miracle! he himself was the author and first institutor of marriage: and therefore was pleased to give it a sanc tion, and a bleffing, by affiffing at it. He came to marry, as it were, by his incarnation, our human nature with his divine person: he came to marry himself to his church, and by imparting to it a spiritual grace to raise Christian matrimony to the dignity of a facrament; which should be a facred and mysterious figno this perpetual union with his church: he came to espoul our fouls to himself; and therefore was pleased to sa your this marriage (in which the contracting partie were, in all appearance, allied both in blood and vil

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tue, with his bleffed mother) with his first miracle. O how happy were they in inviting Jesus and Mary to their wedding! O how unhappy are they who when they marry, shut out God from themselves, and from their mind, to give themselves to their lust, Tob. vi. 17. Over these the devil hath power: because they invite him, rather than Jesus, to their wedding. And is not this the true cause why so many marriages are unhappy for want

of the bleffing of Jefus?

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Confider 2dly, how, in the midst of the marriagefeast, wine was wanting, to teach us, how deceitful are all the pleasures of the world, and how often they fail us, when we expect the most from them. O'tis Jelus alone can furnish our immortal souls, with the true wine that cheareth the heart of man. 'Tis his love alone can present us with pure delights, which bring with them joy and peace, and a certain fore-taste of heaven. He often changes, in favour of his friends, even the waters of the torrent in the way, into delicious wine, by the confolations he gives them in their labours and afflictions, and the spiritual bleffings of his grace, for the advancing their fouls in divine love, and bringing them nearer to himself, the source of all sweetness: whilft the world, the flesh and the devil, do but delude us, by flattering our fenses at first with a false sweetness, which quickly comes to an end; and leaves nothing behind it but bitterness, discontent, and remorfe.

Consider 3dly, that this miraculous change, made by our Lord, of water into wine, (which was his first miracle) was a prelude to another more miraculous change, which he made at his last supper, and will continue to make, by his ministers, even to the end of the world, of bread and wine into his own body and blood. With this wonderful miracle, he daily honours the wedding feast of his own espousals with our souls, in order to communicate himself to his spouses and to unite them to himself. And by the means of this communication of himself to us, he operates another no

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less wonderful change in us, by which he changes us in a manner into himself. The corporeal food we take is by the means of our natural heat daily changed into our steff and blood: but this spiritual food like the fire, which changes all things into itself, is not changed into our substance, but changes and transforms our souls as it were, into its own nature, to make them one with this bread of life; here by grace, hereafter by glory. O miraculous change! O blessed conversion!

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Conclude to be ever thankful for all the wonders, which the fon of God has wrought, and continues daily to work for thee. But particularly join with the church at this time of the Epiphany, in celebrating with love and gratitude, those three miracles, which were the forerunners of, and introductions to all thy good, thy vocation to the true faith, thy being regenerated in Christ, by baptism; and admitted to his heavenly feast in the blessed Eucharist in which thou art incorporated with him. O who can ever sufficiently love him, and praise him, for these great wonders of his love to us!

#### January 16.

On the necessity of consideration.

Christian world, and see how much Satan and sin every where reign. See how many thousands in every nation, of all degrees and conditions, pass their lives in mortal sin, with little or no concern, or apprehension, either of death, judgment, or hell: see how they wallow in the mire of carnal pleasures: see how they indulge their passions, and prefer every empty toy, meer bubbles, before their immortal souls; before their God, and a happy eternity: see how numbers of them, even live without God, and in a total forgetfulness of him: then see how hell opens wide its jaws, and daily swallows down thousands of them; cut off alas in the midst of their sins, when they least expected

expected it, and hurried away in a moment from their short-lived, empty, and deceitful fatisfactions, to dreadful, and everlasting torments. And whence proceeds all this difmal scene of evils, but from the want of confideration? with desolation is all the earth made desolate, faith the prophet, because there is none that con-

sidereth in the heart. Jerem. xii . M...

Confider 2dly, the great truths which the Christian That there is a God of infinite majesty, faith teaches. whose eye is always upon us: A God infinitely good, and infinitely just; and who hates wilful fin with an infinite hatred. A God, who is our first beginning, and our last end, our creator and redeemer to whom we belong by all kind of titles: who made us for himfelf; and fent us hither upon no other errand, and for no other business, but to love and serve him in this world, and to be eternally happy with him in the next: that there is another life hereafter, in comparison with which the present is but a moment: that death will quickly separate us from all these visible things, and fend us into another region, where all that worldlings here fet their hearts on, will appear as smoak: that there is a judgment to come: and that there is a heaven, and a hell, &c. All these are articles of the Christian faith: and all most certainly true; and in themselves very moving. And do all Christians believe these truths? they must believe them, or they are no Christians. But how then is it possible they should live as the generality do? how is it possible that such as believe all these things should live on in fin, and walk in the broad road that leads to hell? O! 'tis for want of confideration. 'Tis because they don't think.

Confider 3dly, that the great difference between the good and the bad Christian, is that the one thinks well on the truths he believes, and by that means lets them fink deep into his foul, and take root there, fo that they bring forth in him the fruits of all virtues: whereas the other does not think; and therefore is little or nothing affected with the truths of the gospel:

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they make no impression upon him; because his faith is assep, or rather dead, for want of consideration. O what wonderful effects have we not seen produced in the world by consideration? how many, even of the greatest sinners, have been reclaimed by it; and drawn back from the very jaws of hell? how many has it sent out of the midst of Babylon to seek their God in solitude; and to consecrate their lives to him. O! that men would but think, what a reformation should we see in the world! O'tis thinking is the true way to heaven; and not thinking the high road to hell!

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Conclude to allow thyself daily some time to meditate upon some or other of the great truths, that relate to God and eternity. 'Tis one of the best means thou hast to secure thy soul. They that will not think of these things now, will infallibly think on them hereafter, when their thinking will only serve to encrease

their eternal mifery.

#### January 17.

On the consideration of God.

ONSIDER first, that we cannot be faved without the knowledge of God, and fuch a knowledge, as may effectually influence our lives, and command both our love and obedience. Now we can neither know God, nor love him as we ought, without the help of consideration. 'Tis consideration that discovers to us his infinite beauty and perfection; and the many preffing motives we have to dedicate ourselves wholly to his love and fervice. 'Tis confideration fets before our eyes his eternal love, and all his benefits to us, and convinces us that he is both infinitely charming and lovely in himself, and infinitely good to us. Without confideration, we know these things, as if we knew them not: we have eyes and fee not. But when these truths are duly weighed and considered by the foul; 'tis then the light of the knowledge of God, egins to dispel our darkness; and in our meditation he fire of his love breaks forth into flames, which weetly carry up the soul towards their heavenly elenent, which is with God; and hinder her from ever

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Confider 2dly, how large a field we have in God or our meditation, whether we confider him as he is n himself, and in his own divine attributes; or with relation to what he is to us, and the titles he has been pleased to assume in our regard. He is in himself ternal, that is, without beginning, without end, without change, felf-existent, independent: he is being itfelf, he alone properly is; I am who am, fays he, Exod. iii. all other things are just nothing at all; they have no being but from him, and in him: he is the being of all beings. He is immense and incomprehensible, and every way infinite: he fills heaven and earth! creating, preferving, moving, ruling, supporting all things. He is infinitely wife, infinitely powerful, infinitely good, infinitely just, infinitely merciful, he is beauty itself, truth itself, and all perfection. See my foul what an immense field we have here for our considerations! It has no end. Here is more than enough to employ us for all eternity; in this vast ocean of the infinite perfections of the Deity, the bleffed themfelves can find no bottom. Here they are happily loft in the contemplation of him, who though he discovers himself to them face to face, and fills their fouls with heavenly pleafure, remains nevertheless incomprehensible, even to the highest angels, because he is every way infinite.

Confider 3dly, that there still remains an ample field for meditation to help us to acquire the knowledge and love of God, in the manifold considerations of what God is in our regard, and how good he is to us. He is our sovereign good: he alone can satisfy our souls. He has loved us first: He is our ancient lover; He is our eternal lover; his thought and heart is always upon us. He is a disinterested

lover:

lover: a most faithful, and most constant lover, whose love never forsakes them, that do not first forfake his love. He is our maker, and our redeemer; the best of Fathers; the best of friends, the spouse of He ever defires to come and dwell with us, and in us; and to impart all his heavenly treasures to us; in a word to give himself to us, and to take us to himself. And are not here sufficient motives to oblige us to love this great and good God; infinitely good in himself, and infinitely good to us? is it posfible that a generous heart, made through love and for love, should hold out against such pressing considerations as these, so far as to refuse a return of love? O divine love, 'tis only because thou art thought of fo little, that thou art fo little known in this wretched world; and 'tis only because thou art so little known, that thou art so little loved. O'tis consideration then is both the true way to know thee, and the true way to love thee!

Conclude ever to feek by daily confiderations and to cherish in thy foul, this faving and savoury knowledge of God; as the fource of divine love and of all thy good. And remember that a deluge of all evils, will come pouring in upon the foul, where this knowledge

of God is wanting. Ofee iv. 1, 2.

#### January 18.

On the consideration of the law of God.

ONSIDER first, that, in order to our salva-tion, we must also have a right knowledge of the holy law and commandments of God: we must know all the precepts and maxims of the Gospel of Jefus Christ: and we must know them in such a manner as to be practically convinced of the beauty of this divine law, of the equity of these commandments; of the excellence of these heavenly precepts, of the truth of these Gospel maxims; that so we may heartily em-

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brace them, love them, and keep them. Now this infers a necessity of a serious and frequent meditation on God's holy law; without which we shall not even know as we ought the duties and obligations of a Christian life; much less shall we have a due esteem and ove for these divine statutes and ordinances, which our great King has made to be for us the way to true life. O! Blessed is the man whose will is in the law of the Lord: and who shall meditate on it day and night. And he shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season; and his leaf shall not fall off: and all whatsoever he shall do shall prosper. Ps. i. O happy meditation, which is the source of so much good! unhappy they who seldom think of this divine law, and therefore neither love it,

nor keep it !

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Consider 2dly, that, even under the old testament, God required of his people, that they should continually meditate on his divine commandments, Deuter, vi. 6, &c. These words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart: and thou shalt tell them to thy children, and thou shalt meditate upon them, sitting in thy house, and walking on thy journey, lying down to bed, and rifing up. And thou shalt bind them as a sign on thy hand, and they shall be, and shall move, between thy eyes. And thou shalt write them in the entry, and on the doors of thy house. Now if under the old law, (when so great perfection was not expected of the faithful as now) God was pleased to require this close application of the foul to the meditating on his divine precepts; how much more does he now expect it from us, under the new covenant of grace and love, in which he delivers his commandments to us, not graven on tables of stone, but on the tables of the heart; not to be laid up in the ark, or deposited in an earthly sanctuary, but to be laid up within us, in the true fanctuary of God in our fouls? Christians, this is our glory, and our wisdom, this is our happiness above all other people, to have the divine law written in our hearts: to keep it there by love and affection, and to read it there by attention

tention and meditation, lest otherwise we lose so great a treasure.

Consider 3dly, what were the sentiments of the royal prophet, with regard to the law and commandments of God, and the duty of meditating continually upon them. He has abundantly declared them in the 118th pfalm, (alias 119th) where there is scarce one verse, in which the beauty and excellence of the divine law, the love and observance of it, the great happiness of keeping it, and the many advantages of meditating upon it, are not ffrongly inculcated. For which reason the church, in her canonical hours of prayer, appoints this pfalm for the daily devotion of her children, in order to inspire into them the like sentiments, with relation to the holy law and commandments of God, and to oblige them daily to meditate upon these divine ordinances. Christians, can any thing else be of so great importance to you, as to fludy well the true way to a happy eternity? Can any other science deserve your attention in comparison with this? Is not your all here at stake? And what other way is there to secure to your fouls a happy eternity, but the knowing and keeping the law and commandments of God? 'Tis this then calls for your study and attention by daily confiderations and meditations.

Conclude to turn henceforwards your thoughts from vain and curious fearches into things little or nothing to your purpose; to the daily considering on what God requires of you by his holy law, what you are to do to please him, and to save your souls, what your duty is to him; and what his will is in your regard. The studying this is our great business. O how little will all other sciences avail, if this be neglected!

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On the consideration of ourselves.

ONSIDER first, that, besides the obligation we lie under of daily confideration, in order to know God, and our duty to him, there is another branch of necessary knowledge, which also calls for our ferious attention and meditation: and this is the knowledge of ourselves. 'This is the highest and most profitable · lesson, ' says the devout A Kempis, ' truly to know, and to despise ourselves.' The knowledge of ourfelves is the foundation of true humility, which is the virtue that teaches us to despise ourselves: and humility is the foundation of all other virtues; they have all a necessary dependance upon it. So that the knowledge of ourselves is, in effect, the foundation of all virtues. Now this knowledge of ourselves is not to be acquired without frequent and ferious confideration. For to know ourselves right we must consider attentively our origin and extraction; what we have hitherto been; what we are now at prefent; and what we shall be by and by: and fuch confiderations as these will open our eyes, and will convince us, what poor wretches we are: and how little reason we have to be proud; and, on the contrary, how many urgent reasons we have to despise ourselves, and to be thoroughly humble.

Consider therefore 2dly, your extraction, as to your body, out of dirt and corruption, as to your soul, out of nothing; and that whatsoever you have, either as to body or soul, above meer nothing, is not of your own growth, but the property of your maker. Reflect that you no sooner came into a being, but you were defiled with sin; and were children of wrath. That your whole life has hitherto been one continued course of sin and ingratitude. And ah! how often have you fallen into that worst of evils, that bottomless pit, of mortal sin? And what a dreadful figure did you then make in the

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fight of God, and his holy Angels? What confusion, what horror, what an eternal damnation was then your due? And is not this still your case at this day? And what title have you then to any regard, either from God or man? What claim to any benefit, or fervice from any of God's creatures? Or what just complaint can you make, if all the world should abhor you, as a traitor to God, a flave to the devil, and a victim of hell; and all creatures should join together against you, to revenge upon you the cause of their creator? Reslect alfo on the many miseries you daily lie under, the small light there is in you, for the discerning true good from that which is only fo in appearance; the strength of your passions, and self-love; your perpetual repugnance to the taking true pains for acquiring real goods, and the violent bent of your inclinations to evil. And then confider how foon death will be with you, and fend your bodies to the worms, and your fouls to the bar of divine justice, under a dreadful uncertainty as to your eternal lot. And fee if, in the confideration of these things, you will not find matter enough to cure your pride, and to bring you to a true fense of your manifold mifery and corruption; that so you may learn entirely to distrust in yourselves; to be ever humble; and to place your whole confidence in God.

Consider 3dly, the other great advantages which the foul acquires by often entering into herself, by the means of serious consideration; and taking an impartial view of the whole state of her own interiour. Here she discovers her spiritual maladies, (to which before she was a stranger) and she is enabled by this discovery, to seek and to apply proper remedies to all her evils. Here she sinds out the secret ambushes of her enemies, especially those more subtle ones of her pride and self-love, which are continually seeking to impose upon her, and deceive her. Here she learns to discern between the different motions of nature and grace, to watch over her own heart, to regulate its affections and inclinations; to guard against her passions, and to order her whole inte-

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riour in fuch manner as to be agreeable to him who defires to make it his everlasting temple. O how happy it is for the foul thus to know herfelf! ah, what will it avail a man to know all things elfe, if he be a

stranger to himself!

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Conclude to make the knowledge of thyself one of thy principal studies for the future. The Saints have always confidered the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of themselves, as the most necessary of all sciences. O study well, by the means of daily meditation, this science of the Saints in both its parts. Daily pray with St. Augustine, noverim te, noverim me. Lord, give me grace to know thee: Lord, give me grace to know myfelf.

#### January 20.

On our first beginning.

ONSIDER first, my foul, that not very long ago thou hadft no being at all; nor any share in the transactions of the world: thou wast not even so much. as thought of by any creature upon earth. In this low aby s of nothing thou hadst been ingulfed from all eternity: and there of thyself thou must have remained to all eternity, infinitely beneath the condition even of the meanest insect, or the most inconsiderable of all God's creatures: fo that whatfoever thou hast at present above this mere nothing, is no acquisition of thy own, nor any property of thine, but the pure gift of thy Maker. Down then with all felf-conceit and prefumption: down with all vain glory: acknowledge thy true origin, thy original nothing: fit always down in the lowest place, even in the centre of thy nothing: ascribe nothing to thyfelf, as of thy own growth, but thy manifold fins: give the whole glory of all the rest to thy Maker.

Confider 2dly, who it was that drew thee out of that deep abysis of nothing, into this being, which thou now enjoyest: who gave thee this power of thinking, this

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conscious life, this will, this memory, this understanding; who made for thee this foul and body? no other but he that made heaven and earth; even the eternal, immense infinite Deity. And how came this great God to think of making thee? what did he fee in thee, that could move him to love thee; and to bestow this being upon thee? O it was nothing but his own infinite goodness: for there could be nothing in thee worthy of his love: he stood in no need of thee: thou couldit do him no service. O! embrace then, with all the powers of thy foul, this infinite goodness of thy God. Give thy whole being to him, who has given it all to thee. Dedicate thy whole felf to his love and fervice, for time and eternity.

Confider 3dly, that God made thee after his own image and likeness, that he might engage thee the more to love him. This image and likeness is in thy foul, which is a spiritual being; and in the spiritual powers of thy soul, thy free will, which nothing controuls, and which can be fatisfied with nothing less than God; and thy underflanding, which is capable of foaring above all things, visible and invisible, and reaching to the contemplation of God himself. O let not then this noble spirit lie any longer groveling in the mire of the earth! Let not this will, that was made to be a queen, be a flave to flesh and blood. Let not this understanding, this mind, this thought, that should contemplate heavenly truths, be bowed down to empty earthly toys.

Conclude to be ever mindful, of thy own nothing: and that thou hast received all thou hast from the pure bounty of God. The fense and remembrance of this truth will teach thee, always to despise thyself, and to

love thy Maker with all thy strength.

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#### January 21.

#### On our last end.

CONSIDER first, my soul, why thou camest hither? what is thy business in this mortal life? for what end has God made thee? upon what errand has he sent thee hither? this should have been the subject of thy meditation from thy first coming to the use of reason: and hast thou ever yet seriously thought on it? thou canst not here plead ignorance: for one of the first things thou wast taught; was that thou wast made for God; and that the business for which thou camest into the world, was to know him, love him, and serve him here, and so to come to enjoy him hereafter, in a happy eternity. O how noble, how glorious, how blessed is this end, for which thou wast made! O how good is thy God, who has made thee for himself, and for heaven; and even from all eternity, has designed this happiness for thee?

Confider 2dly, that properly speaking, thou hast but one thing to do in this mortal life; and that is no other than to answer this end, for which thou wast made, by dedicating thyself, in good earnest, to the love and service of thy Maker. This is that one thing necessary, Luke x. 42. If thou apply thyself feriously to this great business, all is well: if thou neglect this, all will be lost: whatever fuccess thou mayst meet with in any thing else. O what will it avail a man, to gain the whole world, if he lose his own foul, and with his foul, lose his God, and a happy eternity? O let all other bufiness then be subordinate to this: let all that no ways conduces to this, be despised as vain and unprofitable: let all that is opposite to this be avoided, rejected and abhorred, as hurtful and pernicious. O how true is it, vanity of vanities, and all is vanity, besides the loving God, and ferving him alone. Kempis.

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Confider 3dly, the great blindness and misery of worldlings who live in a continual neglect, and forget-fulness of this their only business: whose pursuits are after mere vanities; who weary themselves, like children, in running after butterslies; in catching at bubbles, and empty shadows; such as vain honours, false riches, and deceitful pleasures, that last but one moment; and for these they forfeit God and eternity. And has not this, O my soul, been hitherto thy own case? O be consounded at the thought of thy having been so strangely sensels, and so very wretched. Detest the errors of thy past life: and now at least resolve to mind thy true and only business, and to turn to thy God with all thy heart.

Conclude, fince God is both thy first beginning, and thy last end; fince thou art made by him, and for him, and all thy powers, senses and faculties are designed to bring thee to him; to employ them all henceforward in serving and glorifying him: thus only shalt thou

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### January 22.

#### On the titles God bas to our service

all manner of titles; and therefore cannot without the most crying injustice alienate any part of our being from him, or refuse to employ our whole selves in his divine service, we are his by creation; because he made us; and made us for himself; and therefore has given us a Soul, capable of knowing, loving and enjoying him; and not able to find any true rest or satisfaction but in him. Our whole being is from him: our whole soul and body, with all our powers, senses and faculties belong to him: all whatsoever we possess, interiourly, or exteriourly, is all his. And as the fund is his, so the whole produce ought to be his. As we are absolutely and entirely his property; and

all our time, and all our talents, are but lent us by him; so are we indispensably obliged to dedicate all our hours, all our thoughts, words and actions to him. And have we ever rightly considered this obligation? We belong to God in like manner, by the title of confervation, by which he preserves and maintains every moment the being he has given us: otherwise we should presently return again to our ancient nothing. So that as in every moment we have an obligation to him for our continuance in being what we are: so every mo-

ment we are obliged to be his.

Confider 2dly, that we belong also to God, and that in a very particular manner, by our redemption; by which the Son of God has purchased us for himself and for his Father with his own most precious blood. For we had fold ourselves to Satan: we were become his flaves: we had no longer any share in God; or title to him, we were rebels and traitors to him by fin; and as such we stood condemned to death and to hell. But behold, the Son of God, out of pure love and compassion, comes down from heaven to redeem us; he pays himself the price of our ransom, a great price indeed; even the last drop of his own most facred blood; to deliver us from Satan, fin and hell; to reconcile us to his Father, and to purchase mercy, grace and falvation for us. So that now by virtue of this redemption he claims us as his own property: and it would be a facrilegious robbery to pretend to alienate again from him these souls of ours, which he has purchased for himself with his own blood: It would be even in the language of the apostle, treading under foot the Son of God, and esteeming the blood of the covenant unclean, with which we were fanctified. Heb. x. 29.

Consider 3dly, that we belong also to God, by solemn vows and covenants, and by the dedication, by which we were happily and holily, dedicated and consecrated to him in our baptism, and confirmation; and sanctified to be his temples for ever. Now all those

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Consider 3dly, the great blindness and misery of worldlings who live in a continual neglect, and forget-fulness of this their only business: whose pursuits are after mere vanities; who weary themselves, like children, in running after butterslies; in catching at bubbles, and empty shadows; such as vain honours, false riches, and deceitful pleasures, that last but one moment; and for these they forfeit God and eternity. And has not this, O my soul, been hitherto thy own case? O be consounded at the thought of thy having been so strangely sensels, and so very wretched. Detest the errors of thy past life: and now at least resolve to mind thy true and only business, and to turn to thy God with all thy heart.

Conclude, fince God is both thy first beginning, and thy last end; since thou art made by him, and for him, and all thy powers, senses and faculties are designed to bring thee to him; to employ them all henceforward in serving and glorifying him: thus only shalt thou

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find true comfort here, and heaven hereafter.

#### January 22.

#### On the titles God bas to our service

all manner of titles; and therefore cannot without the most crying injustice alienate any part of our being from him, or refuse to employ our whole selves in his divine service, we are his by creation; because he made us; and made us for himself; and therefore has given us a Soul, capable of knowing, loving and enjoying him; and not able to find any true rest or satisfaction but in him. Our whole being is from him: our whole soul and body, with all our powers, senses and faculties belong to him: all whatsoever we posses, interiourly, or exteriourly, is all his. And as the fund is his, so the whole produce ought to be his. As we are absolutely and entirely his property; and

all our time, and all our talents, are but lent us by him; so are we indispensably obliged to dedicate all our hours, all our thoughts, words and actions to him. And have we ever rightly considered this obligation? We belong to God in like manner, by the title of confervation, by which he preserves and maintains every moment the being he has given us: otherwise we should presently return again to our ancient nothing. So that as in every moment we have an obligation to him for our continuance in being what we are: so every mo-

ment we are obliged to be his.

Confider 2dly, that we belong also to God, and that in a very particular manner, by our redemption; by which the Son of God has purchased us for himself and for his Father with his own most precious blood. For we had fold ourselves to Satan: we were become his flaves: we had no longer any share in God; or title to him, we were rebels and traitors to him by fin; and as such we stood condemned to death and to hell. But behold, the Son of God, out of pure love and compassion, comes down from heaven to redeem us; he pays himself the price of our ransom, a great price indeed; even the last drop of his own most facred blood; to deliver us from Satan, fin and hell; to reconcile us to his Father, and to purchase mercy, grace and falvation for us. So that now by virtue of this redemption he claims us as his own property: and it would be a facrilegious robbery to pretend to alienate again from him these souls of ours, which he has purchased for himself with his own blood: It would be even in the language of the apostle, treading under foot the Son of God, and esteeming the blood of the covenant unclean, with which we were fanctified. Heb. x. 29.

Consider 3dly, that we belong also to God, by solemn vows and covenants, and by the dedication, by which we were happily and holily, dedicated and consecrated to him in our baptism, and confirmation; and sanctified to be his temples for ever. Now all those things, that are once folemnly confecrated to God; and more especially such as are made the temples of the living God, must be always his: and it would be a most grievous sacriledge to pervert them from his service to profane uses; and therefore it would be highly criminal in us to pervert these souls of ours from the love and service of their God, to whom they have been thus folemnly dedicated; and to profane and defile them, by wilful fin. We belong to him also in quality of our king, our father, our Lord and master, the great sovereign of the whole universe, the being of all beings &c. and upon all these, and many more titles, his divine Majesty challenges our love and service, as his undoubted right; O let us never be fo miserable as to refuse him, what he so justly claims. Let us look upon it as our greatest happiness that we belong entirely to him.

Conclude to render faithfully to God, what upon fo many titles belongs to him, by giving your whole selves to him, and employing henceforward both your foul and body, in executing all his wills.

### Fanuary 23.

On the happiness of serving God.

CONSIDER first, those words of the prophet (Isai iii.) Say to the just man: it is well. And reflect on the many advantages, which this flort word well comprizes and ensures to the just, both for time and eternity. Honour, riches and pleasure are the things on which the world fets the greatest value: but they are not to be found where the world feeks them; but only in the service of God. It is indeed a greater bonour to be a fervant of God, than to be the emperour What then must it be to be his of all the earth. friend and favourite; to be his spouse, to be his child, to be his temple? can any worldly honours be compared with these? O how glorious a dignity it is to be

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heir apparent to a heavenly and eternal kingdom? O how happy, in the mean time, during our mortal pilt-grimage, to walk and converse with God; to be as familiar as one pleases with this great king; to have admittance into his closet whenever we will; to have an assurance from him of a savorable audience, and of obtaining all our requests &c? How truly honorable is it to have one's name enrolled in the book of life; one's character established, not in the mean village of this world (which nevertheless cannot help admiring and esteeming true virtue) but in the great city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem? O my soul, let such honours

as these be the only objects of thy ambition.

Confider 2dly, how rich the just man is: not always indeed in those worldly possessions, which every accident may take away; and which can never fatisfy the heart: but in treasures infinitely more valuable of virtue, grace, and merit, which all the money in the world is not fufficient to purchase; and which make the foul rich for eternity. But the fervants of God have a still greater treasure than this, viz. God himfelf; whom the whole world cannot take from them, as long as they take care not to drive him away, by wilful fin. He is their protector, and their reward exceeding great. Gen. xv. He is always with them : he is a tender father to them; the eye of his special providence is ever upon them; his Angels encamp about them, to defend them, and deliver them from evil. a word, God is all things to them that fear and love him: fo that even as to the goods of this world, he never forfakes those that do not first forfake him. my foul, fee thou feek no other treafure but him: He will make thee rich indeed: fear no lofs but the lofing of him: If thou hast him, nothing can make thee miserable: but without him nothing can make thee happy.

Consider 3dly, the solid pleasures that attend a virtuous life: such as the satisfaction, peace and joy of a good conscience; the sense that holy souls have of

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Gods goodness, and love for them; the experience they have of his fweetness, in their recollection and prayer; the confolations of the Holy Ghoft, and the ravishing delights they often find in God, as a certain foretaste of the joys of heaven; the comfortable profpect of a happy eternity, after their short mortal pilgrimage; and above all their love of God, and a bleffed conformity to his will in all things, which sweetens even their greatest crosses. Such pleasures as these are far beyond all that worldlings can pretend to: pleasures pure and spiritual, which have supported, and even given an inexpressible joy, to the martyrs, under the worst of their torments: which have fweetned all the labours and penitential austeritées of other saints; and made them think whole nights too fhort, when spent with God in prayer. O! how great then is that errour, how per--nicious is that deceit, by which fatan perswades the children of this world, that there are no pleasures in a virtuous life; whereas indeed there is no true pleafure any where elfe.

Conclude, fince thy whole happiness, in time, as well as eternity, depends entirely upon loving and ferving God; to set out from this hour in quest of this happiness, by entring upon the beautiful path of

virtue, which alone can bring thee to it.

#### January 24.

On the vanity of all those things, that keep worldlings from the service of God.

CONSIDER first, how truly vain all those things are which poor deluded worldlings preser before their God: empty bubbles, mere toys and trisles, false appearances, deceitful baits, laid by the enemy to catch their souls; gilded pills, that conceal a deadly poison; deluding dreams; and airy phantoms, that will all vanish away in a moment, and leave both their hands, and their hearts empty: and then alast the

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the scene will change; and their sool's paradise of an imaginary happiness, shall turn to real, dreadful and everlasting evils. O ye children of men, how long will you be in love with vanity? how long will you run after mere lies, and deceit? Resect upon those that are gone before you; upon those that have enjoyed the most of what this world could afford of honours, riches and pleasures: and tell me what judgment you think they make of them now. O they will certainly cry out with Solomon (Eccles. ii. 11) that in all these things they found nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit. They will loudly condemn their own past folly and madness, in having set their hearts upon such toys, to the loss of God and their souls.

Consider 2dly, and take a nearer view of these worldly idols, these phantoms of honours, riches and pleafures; and fee with what toil they are acquired, with what cares and fears they are possessed; how easily they are lost; how great evils they are exposed to; what a slavery they bring along with them; how short, and how unconstant they are; how false and deceitful; how often embittered with gall: how mean, and unworthy the affections of a Christian; how far beneath the dignity of an immortal foul, made for nothing less than God; and how uncapable of giving any folid content or satisfaction to a heart that can never rest but in its maker. O how truly miserable then are all these children of Babylon, who are enflaved to things fo base, so vile, so filthy! How wretched is that life that is all spent in this manner, in weaving cobwebs, in running after butterflies, in catching at shadows! in squandering away those precious hours, that were given to secure to the foul a happy eternity, in impertinent amusement, in idle, foolish and often finful conversation; in dreffing out, or pampering a carcale that must quickly be the food of worms, in publick houses, in hanging . over a pack of cards, in reading love tales and romanccs, and fuch like empty fooleries. Surely fuch a life as this must be most irkfome and tedious, void of

all true content, joy, peace, or comfort here, and of

all prospect of happiness hereafter.

Confider 3dly, how this folly and mifery of worldlings is described by the prophet Isaias chap. lix. where he tells them that they put their trust in that which is a mere nothing; that they speak vanities; that is, that their whole discourse and conversation is empty, foolish, and nothing to the purpose; that they conceive labour, and bring forth iniquity: that they are fitting day and night upon the eggs of asps, (most poifonous ferpents) which if they eat will bring present death; and if they batch, will turn out ferpents, and destroy them. That all their works are but spending their bowels in weaving spiders webs, which can never cloath them; unprofitable works, fit for nothing but to catch flies: that their thoughts and devices are all vain and unprofitable; and that their ways lead to destruction: that their paths are crooked; and that there is no judgment in their steps; and that who soever treadeth in them, knoweth no peace. O fee how pathetically the holy Spirit has here described the pains and labours poor worldlings take in the pursuit of lying madnesses which bring all kind of evils and death to their fouls, without any manner of real profit, or pleasure: and learn thou to be more wife than to walk in their footsteps.

Conclude never to imitate this wretched choice of blind mortals, who turn away from God to follow after cheating vanities: but to despise from thy heart all those childish toys, and to turn to the charming paths

of wisdom, virtue and truth.

### January 25.

On the Conversion of St. Paul.

CONSIDER first, and admire the wonders of I the grace of God, in the conversion of St. Paul, fuddenly changed from a fiery zealot for the Jews religion, and a bloody perfecuter of the church of Christ,

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to be a fervent Christian, a zealous preacher of the Gospel, a vessel of election to carry the name of Christ to nations and kings, a doctor of the gentiles, an apostle of Jesus Christ, and a most eminent Saint. Learn from hence the greatness of God's mercy, and the power of his grace: learn never to despair of the conversion of any one, how remote soever he may feem from the faith, or grace of God: who could be more remote than the convert of this day. Affure thyself that the hand of God is not shortened: and that his power, mercy and goodness is as great now as ever: and therefore never cease to pray to God for the conversion of infidels and sinners. 'Tis likely the conversion of St. Paul is in a great measure owing to the prayers of St. Stephen. Join with the church on this day, in glorifying God, and returning him thanks through Jesus Christ, for the wonders of his mercy, and grace in St. Paul, and the many thousands he has brought through his preaching to the ways of truth and life.

Consider 2dly, that the conversion of St. Paul is, by the church, set before our eyes this day, as a model of a perfect conversion, from which sinners may learn, 1st, how readily they ought to correspond with the calls and graces of God inviting them home, 2. how they ought to yield themselves up entirely to him, and 3. what their lives ought afterwards to be, in confequence of that distinguishing mercy which God has shewed them in their conversion. Paul was no sooner called by the voice of Jesus Christ, but he presently obeyed the call, and yielded himself up to be his forever. His prayer he then made was short in words, but very expressive of the perfect disposition of his soul in this regard, and of the facrifice he defired to make of himself, without the least reserve, to the holy will of him that called him. Lord, faid he, what wilt thou have me to do? As much as to fay; My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready: here I am prostrate at thy feet, desirous only to know, and to do thy will; fend me where thou pleafest; ordain

dain concerning me what thou pleaseft; I defire to be thine in life and death: I defire to have no exceptions at all to thy bleffed will. See also how, being fent into the city, where he was to learn of Ananias the will of God, and to receive from him the facrament of regeneration, for the washing away his fins; he there continues for three whole days, neither eating, nor drinking, but wholly employed in prayer. O this was shewing himself to be a convert indeed; this was being quite in earnest in preparing himself for his baptism; this was laying a folid foundation for a new life. O that all penitents would fet this great example before their eyes, when they pretend to make their peace with God; and would, like Paul, prepare themselves, by fervent and long-continued prayer, joined with the exercifes of mortification and penance! thus we should fee other fort of conversions, than we commonly meet

with now-a-days.

Confider 3dly, the fentiments of St. Paul, with regard to the life he looked upon himself obliged to lead, in confequence of the mercy God had shewed to him in his conversion. He had ever before his eyes the greatness of this mercy: he considered himself as having been, to his thinking, the greatest of all sinners; and how God had spared him all the while he went on in his fins; and, without any merit on his part, had, by an evident miracle, wrought in an instant, that total change in him: and therefore he was convinced, as he both declared in his words, and shewed forth in his practice, that he could do no less than devote his whole life to the love and service of his Saviour, to testify his gratitude for the love he had fhewed to him. This confideration carried him through all his labours and afflictions, and animated him to meet death in all its shapes; (for he was dying daily as he tells us) because Christ had loved him, and had died for him; and therefore the love of Christ pressed him, that he might hive no longer to himself, but to him who had shewed him

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Conclude to learn in practice the lessons which St. Paul teaches you in his conversion, and in particular to have a great esteem of the grace of reconciliation, and of that unspeakable mercy and love, which God has shewed you, in receiving you again, after you had fallen from him by sin. Learn also from him to testify your gratitude, by dedicating yourselves hence forward, in good earnest, to the love and service of him who has done such great things for you.

## January 26.

On the evil of mortal fin.

ONSIDER first, the enormous malice of mortal fin, inafmuch as it is infinitely opposite to the infinite goodness of God; and thou wilt find it to be a bottomless pit, which no created understanding can fathom. As none but God himself can fully comprehend his own infinite goodness, so none but God himself can perfectly comprehend the infinite enormity that is found in this opposite evil. And as God effentially loves his own goodness, with an infinite love, and cannot cease to love it, no more than he can cease to be God: fo he effentially hates mortal fin with an infinite hatred; and cannot cease to hate it, wherever he sees it. didft thou think, my foul, that thou wast committing so great, so dreadful, so abominable an evil, when first thou rebelledst against thy God by mortal fin ? O how couldst thou dare so often to repeat this enormous treafon! or how couldst thou endure to carry about with thee, for fo long a time, fo odious, fo hideous a monfter? O how much art thou indebted to the boundless mercies of thy God, and to the precious blood of his Son, that he has tolerated thee so long, and not cast thee long ago into hell!

Consider 2dly, that there is not upon earth, no nor in hell itself, a greater evil than mortal fin: 'tis without any comparison, the greatest of all evils; it is the parent both of the devil and of hell, for hell was only made for mortal fin, and the devil was an angel till he was transformed into a devil by mortal fin. So that, in truth, mortal fin is a monster more hideous than hell; more filthy and abominable than the devil himfelf. This dreadful evil, which the damned fee and feel, for all eternity, in the midft of their fouls, torments them more than all the devils: 'tis this that oppreffes them with ics everlasting weight; 'tis this that feeds the ever-gnawing worm of their guilty conscience; 'tis this is the fewel of that fire that never is extinguished; 'tis this that eternally possesses their fouls, and both keeps God eternally from them, and them eternally from God. Oh that finners had but a just notion of this dreadful evil here! It would effectually keep them from feeling its enormous weight hereafter. If they did but sufficiently apprehend what they are going to do, when they offer to commit a mortal fin, they would choose a thousand deaths before so great an evil.

Consider 3dly, that what makes fin the greatest of all evils, is because it strikes at God himself. It is a rebellion; 'tis a high treason against him. Satan, the first finner, proudly fought to place himself in the throne of God; and all that unhappily follow the example of this arch-rebel, by confenting to mortal fin, are, in some measure, guilty of the like perversity : inasmuch as they turn away from God, as he did, affecting, in the like manner, an independency on God; and impiously prefer their own will, and the gratifying their own inclinations and passions before his holy will, and his divine ordinances. Thus they renounce their allegiance to him, and disclaim his authority and sovereignty over them; they refuse to be subject to his laws: they condemn his wisdom; they flight his justice; they abuse his mercy and goodness; and instead of seeking in the first place (as upon all accounts they are bound to do) the glory of their Maker's name, the propagation of his

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his kingdom, and the fulfilling of his will, they fet up that idol felf in the place of the living God; they feek their own worldly honour, interest, and pleasure, more than his: and to this unhappy idol of their own felflove, they factifice their foul and conscience, their God and all. And can there be any other evil comparable to this ?

Conclude utterly to renounce, deteft, and abhor, for the time to come, all mortal fin; and to fly it more than hell itself. And as to all thy past guilt in this kind, bewail it from thy heart as the greatest of all evils, and do penance for it all thy life time.

## January 27.

On the manifold aggravations that are found in mortal fin.

ONSIDER first, that, besides the bottomless depth of the malice of mortal fin, from its oppofition to the infinite goodness of God, and the high treafon it contains against his divine majesty, there are divers other enormities and most heinous aggravations in every mortal fin, that beyond measure extend and multiply its guilt. The first of these is the sinner's black ingratitude to God, which is a circumstance that violently aggravates the guilt of every fin he commits against his Maker and Redeemer, his ancient lover, his dearest friend, and perpetual benefactor; from whom he has received, and daily receives, all that he has, and all that he is; and this out of pure love, without any defert on his part, and fuch a love as can fuffer no comparison, since it has brought the lover down from heaven, to die for this very wretch that dares thus ungratefully to offend him, and to crucify him again by fin. I know not whether any of the devils in hell, if God had done so much for them, would ever have been so ungrateful as to offend him any more. wantagig baqada sanaba rixah nadide

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der of his own Confider 2dly, the manifold injustice that is found in every mortal fin, in the violation of all the rights and titles that God has to us, and to our love and fervice; as he is our first beginning, and our last end, who made us, and made us for himself: as he is the very being of our beings, the great monarch of the whole creation, the Lord of us and of all things; as he has purchased us for himself, and marked us out for his own; and we, on our part, have been folemnly dedicated and confecrated to him, that we might be his both for time and eternity. The wretched finner breaks through all these considerations; withdraws himself from his Maker, his King, his Lord, and his Redeemer; villainously and facrilegiously alienates from him, what, upon all these titles, is strictly his; and makes all over to his mortal enemy; and in exchange for some petty trifle, he fells to him both his foul and his God. And does not fuch an enormous injustice cry to heaven for vengeance? More especially in Christians; in whom it is joined with the aggravating circumstances of a profanation of the temple of God; and of a notorious perfidiousness, by the violation of their solemn vows and engagements made to him.

Confider 3dly, that in every mortal fin, there is found in some measure the guilt of the breach of all the ten commandments, according to that of St. James ii. 10. He that offends in one point is guilty of all. Because, whosoever willfully breaks through any part of the divine law by mortal fin, violates the first commandment, by turning away from the true and living God, and refusing him the worship that is due to him, he is guilty of idolatry, by worshipping the creature, which is the object, or occasion of his fin, rather than the creator, who is bleffed for ever, Rom. i. He profanes the facred name of God, and blasphemes him, if not in words, at least in facts, by treading his authority under foot. He violates the true and everlasting sabbath of God's rest, by the servile work of fin, by which he makes himself a flave to Satan. He dishonours, in a most outrageous manner, the best of fathers. He is guilty of the murder of his own foul, and of the Son of God himself, whom he crucifies by sin. He is guilty of a spiritual adultery, by prostituting to Satan his soul which has been espoused to Christ. He is guilty of thest, robbery, and sacrilege, as we have seen above, by taking away from God what belongs to him. He bears false witness in fact against the law of God, in savour of lies and deceit, for all sin is a lie. And, that nothing may be wanting to compleat his wickedness, he is guilty of coveting what is not his, and what he has no right to; and what the law of God restrains him from. So manifold is the guilt that is found in any one wilful sin.

Conclude to detest the ingratitude, injustice, perfidiousness, and all the other aggravations, that are found in mortal sin; and to make it thy continual prayer, that thou mayst rather die ten thousand deaths, than once incur this dreadful complication of all evils.

## January 28.

On the presumption, folly, and madness, of the

ONSIDER first, the desperate presumption of a worm of the earth, that dares to attack, by wilful fin, the Almighty Lord and Maker of heaven and earth; who holds the thread of his life in his hand, and can in that moment let him drop into hell. And what can the wretch expect from making war with God? With a God who is eternal, immense, and every way infinite; a God whose eye is ever upon all his ways; and who has an infinite hatred for mortal fin: a God without whom he can neither live, move, nor be? What then can he expect from making this God his enemy, but the loss of all manner of good, and the incurring of all mifery, both temporal and eternal. Alas! from the moment he engages in this desperate war, the fword of God is drawn against him, and continually hangs over his guilty head, and the perils of death, judgment, and hell, encompass him on all sides. The 150 captain ready damned; his fellow-soldiers are daily falling down the precipice, and crowding into hell; and what has he

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to hope for?

Confider 2dly, the folly and madness that is found in every wilful fin: forafmuch as the wilful finner, by his own act and deed, freely and deliberately parts with his God, an infinite good, and the fource of all his good; gives up his title to heaven, together with all his treasures of virtue, grace, and merit, and sells his foul into the bargain, to be a flave to Satan here, and a victim of hell hereafter: and in exchange for all this, he purchases nothing but bubbles and shadows, that are unable to afford him one moment of folid content, that leave nothing behind them but uneafiness and remorfe; and continually expose him to all kind of misery, both for time and eternity? And is it possible to conceive a greater madness than this? Alas! it is exchanging heaven for hell, God for the devil? the supreme and infinite good, for the very abys of endless and infinite evils.

Consider 3dly, the folly and madness of sinners in looking for any fuccess in their ways, or bleffing on their undertakings, whilst they oppose, by wilful fin, the holy will of God, and violate his divine law and commandments. All men have an in-bred defire of their own well-being; this the finner pretends to feek in the unhappy choice he makes, whenever he indulges himfelf in fin: but alas! in vain does he feek it where 'tis not to be found. He feeks for happinels in the way that leads to all kind of mifery; he feeks for honour in that, which is in itself most disgraceful, and which strips him of all true honour: he feeks an imaginary gain in that which brings with it the greatest of all losses he feeks for pleasure, and meets with pain, discontent, and upeafines: he feeks for peace and joy, and finds nothing but diffurbance and forrow: he feeks for a false liberty, and falls into true flavery : he feeks for life, but all in vain; because he seeks it in the region of death. And can any thing be more extravagant and mad, than

to feek for any good, whilft one wilfully turns one's back upon the fource of all good? Alas I the foul here experiences to her cost, in the opposition and disappointments the meets with, in all her projects and all her pursuits, the truth of those menaces of God by the prophet Ofee, Ofee ii 6. &c. I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and I will flop it up with a wall; and lbe shall not find her paths. And she shall follow after her lovers, and shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, and shall not find them, &c. For 'tis even thus the poor finner, in all he turns to, when he turns away from God, meets with a hedge of thorns in his way, which he cannot pals over, and runs after a shadow that flies Conclude to be more wife, and to feek thy happiness

where it is to be found, that is, in the love and fervice of God: if thou feek it any where elfe, thou shalt lofe thy labour; and be in danger of lofing thyfelf too. and of condemning thy folly and madness for a long eternity as endless are store of

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#### no galleto On the difmal bavock fin has made in the world.

ONSIDER the bavock this monftrous evil of wilful fin made, in its first conception, in heaven itself; when one fin, consented to but in thought, changed in an inftant millions of most beautiful Angels into uply devils; cast them out of heaven, and condemned them eternally to hell. O dreadful poilon, that canst thus blast in a moment so many legions of heavenly spirits! O dreadful guilt that canst draw such a difmal, and irrevocable judgment from a God, whose very nature is goodness, and who loves all his works, upon his favourite creatures! and thou, my foul, that knowedst this, how didst thou ever dare to sin? And how hath thy God been able to endure thee, under the puilt of fo many treasons it all alarmed a may it

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56 MEDITATIONS for

2. Confider, the havock fin has made upon earth, when this monster, banished from heaven, was entertained by our first parents, in the earthly paradise. Alas! in one moment it stript them and all their race of that original justice, innocence and fanctity in which they were created, and of all the gifts of divine grace; it wounded them in all the powers of the foul; it gave them up to the tyranny of fatan, it cast them out of paradife, and condemned them both to a temporal and eternal death. In the mean time it let loofe upon them a whole army of all manner of evils, both of foul and body; which are all of them the difmal confequences of fin; and has entailed upon all mankind an unexpresfible weakness with regard to the doing of good; and a violent inclination to evil; which has filled the world with innumerable fins, and with innumerable most dreadful judgments both upon particulars, and upon whole nations, in punishment of fin.

3. Confider, that fin by infecting and corrupting fo many of the principal creatures of God, has in some measure blasted the whole creation, and subjected the whole to many evils, which the Apostle (Rom. viii 20 21) calls the servitude of corruption, inasmuch as God's creatures are abused by men and devils and made subservient to sin and corruption; as also vanity, inalmuch as by occasion of fin, they are also liable to a perpetual instability, and a variety of defects. Hence the whole creation, by a figure of speech, is faid by the Apostle to groan, and to be in labour; longing as it were for its deliverance from its unhappy subjection to fin, into the liberty of the glory of the children of God; which shall then be accomplished, when the reign of fin shall be utterly abolished; and the world being purged by the last fire, God shall make for his children, new heavens and a new earth, in which justice shall dwell. 2. Peter iii. 13. O when shall that happy hour come! when shall this hellish monster sin be forever excluded from all other parts of the creation; and shut up in its proper place, never to come out to blast the world any more! nity to make it hell! Sinners, how

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every Day in the Year.

Conclude to abhor the evil that has made such dreadful havock both in heaven and earth; and to spare no pains for the abolishing of it both in thyself, and in all others.

## January 30.

On the dismal bavock sin makes in the Soul of a Christian.

1. ONSIDER, how strangely the soul is changed, that falls from the state of grace into mortal fin. The metamorphole is not unlike to that of an angel into a devil. A foul in grace is a child of God, a spouse of Jesus Christ, a temple of the Holy Spirit. But in the moment the consents to mortal fin, the forfeits all her honour and dignity; fhe becomes a flave of hell, a prostitute to satan, a den of unclean spirits. A foul in grace is beautiful, like an angel, and agreable to the eyes of God and his faints: but a foul in mortal fin is ugly like the devil, and most odious, filthy and loathfome to her Maker, and all his heavenly court. A foul in grace is very rich, she is worth an eternal kingdom; the always carries her God about with her, and is entitled to the eternal possession of him: but when the falls into mortal fin, the lofes at once all her store of virtue and merit, she becomes wretchedly poor and miserable, and instead of possessing God, she is possessed by the devil.

2. Consider, that sin gives a mortal wound to the soul; it is the death of the soul. For as it is the soul of man that gives life to the body; and when the soul is departed, the body is dead; and becomes a lump of clay, without either sense or motion: so 'tis the grace of God that gives life to the soul; and that soul is dead, which by mortal sin has lost her God, and drove away his grace from her. O dismal separation! O dreadful death indeed, which, wanteth nothing but eternity to make it hell! Sinners, how can you endured

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yourselves under this wretched condition? If a dead carcase, from which the soul is gone, be so very loathfome and frightful, that few would endure to pass one night in the same bed with such a bedfellow; how can you bear to carry continually about with you, night and day, a filthy carcase of a soul dead in mortal sin; and quite putrified and corrupted by her finful habits? Ah! open your eyes now at least, to see your deplorable case; and to detest the monster fin, the cause of all your mifery. O run to him, without any further delay, by humble prayer, and repentance, who alone

can raise the dead to life!

3. Confider how true that is of the scripture, that they that commit fin and iniquity are enemies to their own foul, Tob. xii. 10. And that he that leveth iniquity bateth his own foul, Pf. x. 6. Since of all the evils that we can possibly incur, either here or hereafter, there is none comparable to the evil, we bring upon ourselves by mortal sin: so that if all men upon earth, and all the devils in hell, should all conspire together, with a general licence from God, to do us all the mifchief, and to inflict upon us all the torments they could invent; they could never do us half fo much hurt as we do ourselves by one mortal sin. Because all that they cando, as long as we don't confent to fin, cannot hurt the foul; whereas we ourfelves, by confenting to any one mortal fin, bring upon our own fouls, a dreadful death, both for time and eternity. Good God! never fuffer us to be fo wretchedly blind, as to become thus the wilful murtherers of our own fouls.

Conclude never more to join thyfelf with thy mortal enemies the world, the flesh, or the devil, in waging war against thy own foul by wilful fin. But make it thy continual prayer to God, that he would never fuffer thee at any rate to consent to so great an evil; though thou wert even to endure a thousand deaths for the refusal. nogu buil

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# January 31. 10 th Marie

On the judgments of God upon mortal fin.

ONSIDER first, that besides all the sad effects of mortal sin, already mentioned, which are more than fufficient to demonstrate how heinous this worst of evils is in the fight of God; there still remain divers other convincing arguments of the hatred God bears to it, from the manifold judgments he has of old, and daily does, execute upon them, that are guilty of it; and shall continue to execute, to the end of the world, and even to all eternity. Witness of old the judgment of the deluge, which in punishment of the general corruption of all flesh, swept off at once all the finners of the earth, and hurried them down to hell. Witness the judgment of fire from heaven on Sodom and the neighbouring cities: witness the many judgments on the rebel Israelites in the wilderness; particularly that remarkable one of the earth opening, and swallowing up alive Kore and his companions; and the fire from the Lord, destroying in an instant fourteen thousand seven hundred of their abettors Numb. xvi. Witness, in every age of the world, millions that have been hurried away when they leaft expected it, by violent or untimely death in punishment of their crying fins; besides many instances of flourishing cities, yea, and of whole nations too destroyed by wars, pestilences, famines, earthquakes &c. all brought upon them by their fins. O great God! who shall not fear thy almighty wrath, which always looks towards wilful finners? who shall not fear the dreadful evil of mortal Sin, which thus provokes thy avenging justice?

Consider 2dly, that the thefe visible judgments of God upon impenitent sinners, by which they are snatched away before their time by unprovided death in the midst of their sins, be both very common, and

very terrible; yet there is another kind of more fecret judgments, which he daily executes upon thousands, which is far more terrible; inasmuch as it brings upon them a far more dreadful damnation. And that is, when in punishment of their abuse of grace, and obstinacy in fin, he gives them up at length to a reprobate sense, and to a blindness and hardness of heart: fo that they have now no more any fear, or thought of God, or his judgments, or any concern at all for their fouls, or for eternity. Now this is indeed the broad road to final impenitence, and is in its confequences the very worst of all God's judgments. It was thus he did by the Jews, according to the prediction of the royal prophet Pf. Ixviii, letting their eyes be darkened, that they should not see; and bowing down their back always --adding iniquity upon their iniquity, &c. viz. by withdrawing his lights and his graces from them; and fogiving them up to their own wicked inclinations; and thus he daily does with thousands of habitual sinners. in punishment of their slighting and resisting his repeated calls Proverb.i. 24. &c. fuffering them to go on in their wretched ways, and to add daily fin upon fin, (without ever thinking of repentance) and confequently hell upon hell: which proves at long run a far more dreadful judgment upon them, than if upon their first fin, the earth had opened, and swallowed them down alive into hell.

Consider 3dly, the judgments of God upon mortal sin, in the eternal duration of the torments of hell. Of sinners go down, now whilst you are alive, into that bottomless pit; and take a serious view of the rigour of God's justice there, of that worm that never dies, of that fire that never is extinguished, of that everlasting rage and despair, and of all that complication of the worst of evils, that is to be found in that wosul dungeon: and then tell me what you think of the hatred God must bear to every mortal sin; when he, who is infinitely good, and infinitely just, and cannot punish any one beyond what he richly deserves, condemns every soul that dies under any such guilt, to all this

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extremity of milery, for all eternity. Surely the difmal prospect of this scene of wo, must suffice to convince you of the enormity of mortal fin. But if any thing be here wanting to a full conviction; turn your eyes upon Jesus Christ the Son of God: and see how he was treated by the justice of his Father, for our fins, which he had taken upon himself to expiate : see him agonizing in the garden, and fweating blood, under their enormous weight: fee the multitude and variety of torments he endures for them, till his expiring upon a cruel and difgraceful cross; and how notwithstanding the infinite dignity of his person, the divine justice would admit of nothing less than of all these sufferings. of his own Son for the expiation of any one mortal fin: and I am perswaded that the fight of a God, crucified for fin, must more effectually demonstrate to you the hatred God bears to this monstrous evil; than the fight of hell itself, with all its dreadful, and everlasting torments.

Conclude by giving thanks to God for having spared thee so long in thy sins: and resolving now to labour in earnest to avert by a serious and speedy conversion, those judgments, which thou mayst have reason to apprehend, are actually hanging over thy head for thy sins.

# Confider Toly of February 11 square of the Confider to the formand of held.

On not making light of venial fins.

CONSIDER first, that although there be no manner of comparison between the guilt of a mortal sin, and that of a venial sin; as there is no manner of comparison between a mote and a beam, Matt. vii. 3. Yet the guilt even of the least venial sin, considering that it is an offense of a God, infinitely great, and infinitely good, is so displeasing in his sight, that no soul that is stained with it, can ever be admitted into his presence, till this guilt be purged away; and Vol. I.

no man living can be allowed, by any power in heaven or in earth, to commit any one venial fin; no not to fave a kingdom, or even to fave the whole world: because the offense of God is a greater evil, than the loss of the whole world: and we are not to do any thing that is evil to fave the whole world. Christians, do you think of this, when upon every trifling apprehension of incurring the displeasure of man, you take refuge in a lie, which is fure to diplease your God? Do you think of this, when you go on with to little concern, indulging yourselves in vanity, curiofity, fenfuality, loss of your pretious time, anger, impatience, and other finful habits, upon the notion that these are but venial fins; and therefore need not be regarded? Oh! you will find one day to your cost, how much you have been deceived, if you do not correct in time this dangerous and pernicious errour.

Confider 2dly, the danger, to which the foul exposes herself, when the makes light of venial fins; even the danger of the very worst of evils, that is of mortal fin, and of all its dreadful consequences, both for time and eternity: according to that of the wifeman Ecclus. xix. He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little. It is true, venial fin does not of itself immediately destroy, or drive away from the foul the grace and love of God; and therefore does not of itfelf bring present death to the soul : as mortal fin does : but then it weakens, and cools the fervour of divine love, it lessens devotion, it hinders the inspirations of the Holy Ghost from working effectually in the foul, it leaves the foul feeble and drowfy, fick and languifhing; fo that upon the coming of a greater temptation she easily yields, and quickly falls into mortal fin. And how can we expect it should be otherwise, when we have so little regard to God, or his friendship and love, as not to care how much we displease him, provided we can but escape his avenging justice? Or how can the fire of the love of God be kept alive for any long time in the foul, when in instead of being nouriffred

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rished with its proper fewel, it is continually losing. ground, by a diminution of its heat and strength?

Consider 3dly, that this danger of falling quickly into mortal fin, by making little or no account of venial fins, is the greater, because of the difficulty there often is of diffinguishing betwirt what is mortal fin and what is only venial: fince even the best divines are often at a loss, to find the limits between the one and the other. So that all fuch as are in the unhappy disposition, of venturing without scruple, as far as the utmost limits of venial fin can be extended; are daily exposed to an evident danger, of slipping beyond the bounds, and of falling into the pit of mortal fin: The more because of the manifold subtleties and deceits of felf-love, which is ever ready to favour, and to excufe the inclinations of corrupt nature; and in all fuch cases to make that appear slight, which is really grievous: and the more still, when persons give themselves. up to a tepid, negligent life, as they generally do, who make light of venial fins: for this negligence takes the foul off from her guard, difarms her, and lays her interiour open to the spiritual fins of pride, envy, and such like disorders; which are mortal fins; and which eafily prevail over careless souls, and are seldom thoroughly cured.

Conclude with a fincere resolution of never wilfully and with full deliberation, confenting to any one known fin, how venial soever it may seem to be; and much more of never indulging any habit or custom of any fuch fins. 'Tis hard to reconcile the indulging fuch habits as these with the great commandment of the love of God above all things: at least it cannot be expected that divine love should abide to dwell for any long time in a heart where God is fo often of the how can we say to though be other

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## 403 February 2.

#### On CANDLEMAS DAY.

ONSIDER first, that on this day, the bleffed Virgin Mary, according to the rites prescribed by the ancient law, came to the temple of God, to be purified after her childbearing, and to make her offering, according to what her poverty allowed, of a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons, the one for a whole burnt-offering, the other as a facrifice for fin. Levitic. xii. Admire her ready obedience to a law, in which in reality she was not concerned, being exempted, by that fingular priviledge of hers of bringing forth her Son, without any detriment to her virginal purity. Admire her humility, in being willing to pass for a person unclean, she that was more pure than the Angels; and to be excluded for forty days from touching any thing that was holy, or coming near the house of God; and to be cleansed, by a sin-offering, as if the needed any fuch expiation. Admire her love of purity, which brought her on this day to the temple of God, to be there purified with these legal sacrifices; because she was desirous of omitting nothing, that could any ways contribute to encrease, or maintain purity. And learn to imitate these three great virtues, viz. her ready obedience, her profound humility, and her great zeal and love for purity.

Consider 2dly, that on this day, the blessed Virgin made a rich present to God, in his temple, infinitely surpassing all the offerings, that had ever been made there before; when, according to the law of the first-born, Exod. xiii. she presented her Son, the first-born of the whole creation, by whom all things were made both visible and invisible, to his eternal Father. Parents learn to imitate this presentation, by making an offering of your children to God, by the hands of Mary, to be dedicated forever to his love and service. Christians learn to present him with your hearts, toge-

ther with all their offspring, your thoughts, words, and deeds: learn to make an offering to him of your whole being, every day, and every hour of your life. But then you must not stop here: you must also prefent to him his Son Jesus Christ, and yourselves with him, and thro' him; daily in the facred mysteries; and hourly in the spiritual temple of your souls. The temple of God in Jerusalem was highly honoured on this day, by the prefence of the Son of God, according to that prophely of Aggeus c. ii. The defired of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory: faith the Lord of hosts. . . . . Great shall be the glory of this last house more than of the first, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place I will give peace faith the Lord of hosts. My foul, art not thou ambitious of a share in this glory, peace, and happiness? Invite then this same Son of God, the desired of all nations, into thy inward house; and he will come and make thee the temple of his glory, and bring thee his true peace, which will make thee happy indeed.

Confider 3dly, that on this day the venerable Simeon, who had received a promise from the Holy Ghost, that he should see the Saviour of the world before he died; coming by divine instinct into the temple, whilst our Lord was presented there, took him into his arms, and declared him to be the promised Messias, the glory of Ifrael, and the light of all nations. At the fame time that holy widow Anna the prophetess, who for a great number of years had attended on the Lord in his temple by continual prayer and fasting, was also fayoured with the like grace, and made the like publick profession of her faith in our infant Saviour. This facred meeting of fo many persons of such eminent fanctity, in the temple of God, in company with the Son of God, and his bleffed mother, the church celebrates in the procession of this day; which we make, with lighted candles in our hands; that are folemnly bleffed in the name of Christ, and received from the hand of God's priest, as emblems of the light of Christ. See then Christian Souls, with what affection

of devotion you ought to receive, and to bear in your hands, these hallowed candles, as figures of Christ. O! learn, on this occasion, of holy Simeon, to seek Christ alone, to sigh after him alone, to aspire with your whole souls after his embraces; despising all things else that you may find him. O remember that he is the true light of the world, in his life and doctrine; and determine from this time forward ever to follow him.

Conclude to study well all the lessons, which are to be learnt from the presentation of the Son of God, and the purification of his blessed mother; and to conform yourselves to them in the practice of your lives: that so being purified from all your sins, you may also be worthy to be one day presented to God, in the eternal

temple of his glory.

## February 3.

On the parable of the labourers in the vineyard.

St. Matt. xx.

#### For SEPTUAGESIMA Sunday.

ONSIDER first, that on this day we enter upon a time of devotion and penance, in the way of a preparation for the folemn fast of Lent: and therefore we are called upon by the church, both in the Epistle, and in the Gospel of this funday, to begin now at least to be quite in earnest, in the great concern of our fouls. In the Epistle, we are put in mind by St. Paul (I Cor. ix. and x.) that we are all here running in a race, in which we must push forward with all our power, or we shall lose the prize: that we are engaged in a conflict, for an incorruptible crown; which is not to be obtained without much labour and felf-denial. That if we are not in earnest; notwithstanding all the diffinguishing favours we have received, and daily do receive from God; we shall be in great danger, to be excluded, like the Ifraelites, from the true land of promise. In the parable of the Gospel, we are put in

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mind, that we have but one business in this world, which is here represented under the figure of labouring. in the vineyard of our Lord: that in this labour we are to spend the short day of our mortal life; and by persevering till night in this labour, we are to secure to our fouls the wages of a happy eternity. O let us attend well that we may learn these great lessons!

Consider 2dly, in the parable of this day's Gospel, the infinite goodness of God, manifested to us, in that perpetual attention of his, in every age, fince the beginning of the world, and in every part of the life. of man, to go out by his divine graces and calls; and to invite, to hire and to fend labourers into his vineyard. And after all what need has he of our labours; or of what service can we be to him? or what can we give him, which he does not first give to us? why then does he press us to labour, in his vineyard? O! 'tis his pure goodness and love; that he may make us for ever happy by our ferving him here, and enjoying him hereafter. But what then is the meaning of this vineyard of our Lord? and what is this labour that he calls for at our hands? The vineyard of the Lord of hofts, faith the prophet Isaias (C. v. 7.) is the house of Israel, that is, the people of God. Yes: our own fouls are the vineyard we are commanded to cultivate: no one can be excused from his share in this labour : every one must at least take care of one. To labour here to the purpose, we must in the first place root out the poisonous weeds of finful habits; and cut up all the thorns and briars of our vices and passions; and then we must plant in their stead the good plants of Christian. virtues; and bring them on, by proper care and manure, till they are capable of bringing forth fruit, that may answer the expectation of the great Lord and mafter of the vineyard; and be agreeable to him. O how happy shall we be, if by our labours, and his bleffing, we so cultivate this little part of the Lord's vineyard, that falls to our fhare, as to engage him to come. to us, and recreate himself there with us:

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Consider 3dly, Christian souls, how early in the morning, your good God invited you to work in his vineyard, by the early knowledge he gave you of himfelf, and of the end for which he brought you into the world; and how frequently he has preffed you ever fince, by his repeated graces and calls, in every part of your life, to oblige you to fet about this work in good earnest. But can you fay, you have yet begun? May he not justly reproach you, as he did those whom he found standing in the market place, at the eleventh hour; why stand you here all the day idle? Alas! are you not idle, when you are doing nothing to the purpose? And has not your whole life hitherto been spent, in doing nothing to your purpose? Nothing to answer the great end, the only business, for which you were made? Have you not then been truly idle all the day, that is all the time of your life? O begin now at least to labour: perhaps this is your last hour: your day is far fpent: the night is coming on, when no man can work. John ix. 4. Work therefore now, whilst you have time; lest being surprized by the night, you may have no more time to work in, and fo starve for eternity.

Conclude to make good use of this fresh summons, by which you are called upon this day, by God and his church, to go, and to labour in the vineyard of your souls: lest otherwise by not corresponding to the call, and by receiving this grace of God in vain, you verify in yourselves, that sentence, with which our Lord concludes the parable of this sunday. Many are

called, but few are chofen.

## February 4.

### On the multitude of our sins.

TONSIDER, O my foul, how long it is fince thou wast first so miserable as to fall from thy God by sin: and how much thy sins have been multiplied since that unhappy hour. Alas! didst thou not

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at thy first coming to the use of reason, forseit thy baptismal innocence, and fall a prey to that hellish monster? It was thy indispensable duty, in confequence of thy creation, of thy redemption, and of thy baptismal engagements, to turn to God, as foon as thou wast capable of knowing him, as to thy first beginning, and last end; and to dedicate thyself eternally to his love and fervice. And didft thou comply with this strict obligation? Lucifer and his companions were cast down headlong into hell, because immediately after they were created, inflead of turning to God, as they were bound to do, and dedicating themselves wholly to him, they turned away from him, to take pride in themselves : and hast thou not imitated these rebels, at the first dawning of thy reason, by turning also thy back upon God, and by preferring thy own irregular inclinations, and every fenfeless toy, before: him?

2. Consider, how after so wretched a beginning, thou hast gone on for so many years, daily adding sin to sin; against God, against thy neighbour, against thyself, by work, by word, or by defire: fo that not one day, perhaps not even one hour, has yet passed, without frequently offending God, either by commission, or omission, by ignorance, frailty or malice. Alas! my poor foul, is it not true that even from thy childhood, thou wast given to lies, passion and impurity? Is it not true, that even then thy thoughts went continually aftray from God, after lying fooleries and vanities; that thy prayers were without attention; thy confessions without fincerity, repentance, or amendment; and thy whole life and conversation, without any true sense of God, or any folid good? And haft thou grown any better, by growing older? Or hast thou not rather daily multiplied thy fins; and still more and more corrupted, and defiled all thy powers and faculties, and all thy fenses and members, with repeated offenses and treasons; and continually perverted and abused all the gifts of God against the giver? O! pass over in thy mind (but let it be in the bitterness

of thy foul) all thy years: and lament to find, that thy fins have been indeed far more numerous than the hairs of thy head, besides an infinite multitude of hidden fins, or fins which thou hast occasioned in others, which keep out of fight at prefent; but will all one

day appear against thee.

3. Consider, to the end thou mayif make a better judgment of the immense number of thy offenses and transgressions, how little thou hast complied, in any part of thy life, with the great duty of loving God with thy whole heart; of dedicating thy whole felf to his fervice, and of directing, by a pure intention, all thy thoughts, words, and actions to him: how little restraint thou hast put upon thy natural inclinations, too strongly bent on evil, from thy very childhood; how little guard thou hast kept upon thy roving thoughts and imaginations: how little attention thou haft had not to offend in words; nor to give occasion of offense to others, &c. Reflect also how much of thy precious time thou haft fquandered away; how many graces thou haft received in vain: how little thou haft corresponded with the divine calls and inspirations: how little use thou hast made of the talents, with which thou hast been intrusted: and how very ill thou hast discharged thyself of thy stewardship, in every part of thy life. And then fee what armies of fins will prefently rife up before thy eyes, and stand staring thee in the face. And how wilt thou dare after so much guilt, and so much ingratitude, which is a perpetual aggravation of every one of thy fins, to lift up thy eyes any more to heaven, or fo much as to name the holy name of God, which thou haft fo often prophaned?

Conclude to be always humble, by a true fense and daily remembrance of thy innumerable fins; to offer up daily for them the facrifice of a contrite and humble heart; and to embrace henceforward a penitential

life, as the best security after so much guilt.

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On the goodness of God in waiting for sinners.

ONSIDER first, the wonders of God's goodness in his dealings with finners. See with what patience he bears with them, and that very often for a long time; notwithstanding their repeated provocations, their continally abusing all his bounty and mercy, and that infinite hatred he always bears to mortal fin, wherever he fees it. O my foul, how much art thou indebted to this patience of thy God, in bearing with thee, all these years past, ever fince thy first fall into fin! Alas! hast thou not all this time been playing upon the very brink of that dreadful precipice which conducts to the bottomless pit? Hast thou not been all this while within a hair's breadth of a miferable eternity? Is it not true, that every night thou hast gone to bed, thou didft not know but before the morning thou mightst find thyself in hell? Millions have fallen into that dismal dungeon of endless wo, whilst thy God hath fpared thee: millions are now burning in those unquenchable flames for fewer fins than thou hast committed. O bleffed to all eternity be the infinite goodness of my God; and may all his Angels and Saints praise and glorify him for ever, for having endured me fo long; for having preserved me all this time, and continually watched over me; or elfe my foul had long fince dwelt in hell!

Confider 2dly, the many ways by which God feeks to reclaim finners, and to call them home to him. Reflect on the remorfes, and inward reproaches of conscience, with which he visits them; the terrors of his judgments, and the allurements of his mercies, which he sets before them. See how he is continually calling upon them, by his word, by his preachers, by good books, by good examples, and wholefome admonitions, and by a number of interiour invitations and graces. Has he not dealt thus with thee, my foul, all this time MEDITATION'S JOS

thou hast been going aftray from him? And what is the meaning of all this goodness of thy God to such an undeserving, ungrateful, and obstinate rebel? Why, it is nothing else but his own pure mercy and love, in confideration of the precious blood of his Son. And shall not all this love of his for thee, foften thy heart, and oblige thee, now at least, to resolve in good earnest, to return to him: left otherwise mercy, being long abused, to should give place to justice: and the land which has been so often watered with rain from heaven, and still continues to bring forth nothing but thorns and briars, should fall at length under a dreadful curse, and be condemned to the fire ? Heb. vi. was a pod syawla

Consider 3dly, what encouragement God gives to all finners to return to him. As I live, faith the Lord, I defire not the death of a finner; but that he may be converted from his ways, and may live. O why will you die, O house of Ifrael? Ezech. xxxiii. Return to me and live, chap. xviii. Thou haft gone aftray after many lovers, but return to me, and I will receive thee, Jeremias iii. VI See with what love the good shepherd in the Gospel goes after the loft sheep; and with what joy he lays it upon his shoulders, and brings it home to the fold, See how the father runs out to meet the prodigal child, when he returns home from the hulks of the fwine; fee how he embraces him, cloaths him with the best robe, and makes a feast for him, Luke xv. Reflect how the Son of God, when here upon earth, treated the penitent Magdalene, the thief upon the crofs, and all other finners that had recourse to his mercy : and how he has declared, that there is more joy in heaven over one penitent finner, than over ninety nine just, &c. And let all these instances and testimonies of his goodness to poor sinners, encourage and determine us to flay no no longer away from him by fin; but to arise without delay, and to return to fo good, to fo loving a father, by a thorough conversion. Conclude to abuse no longer the mercies of God,

by continuing in fin, but to turn to him, now at least, in with thy whole heart; and never to depart from him any more.

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Membra On turning from fin to God on a distriction ONSIDER first, that every wilful finner is guilty of two enormous evils: according to that of Jerem. ii. 12, 13. Be aftonished O ye heavens -For my people have done two evils. They have for saken me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns (pits), broken cisterns that can hold no water. Yes, Christians, in every mortal fin, there are always these two exceeding great evils: viz. the turning away from a God infinitely good, and the very fountain of all goodness and life; and the embracing in his stead, that hellish monster sin; by the allurement of some deceitful appearance of an imaginary happiness, justly compared by the prophet, to a broken ciftern, that can hold no water, but only filth and mud, Wherefore, in the conversion of a sinner, there must also be always two principal ingredients, opposite to those two great evils: viz. the turning away from sin, with horiour, deteffation and forrow, for having offended a God, infinitely good in himself, and infinitely good to us: and the returning back to God, to embrace his holy law, and to dedicate the years that remain of life to his obedience, service, and love. Happy conversion that thus brings the poor sinner back from the very worst of evils, to his sovereign good!

Consider 2dly, that this turning away of the foul from fin, which is a necessary ingredient of the finner's conversion, must be effectual: that is, the soul must turn away from her sins in effect. She must not content herself with a slight forrow for her sins; nor with faint purpoles of amendment, nor with a half will; nor yet with making some weak efforts towards beginning a new life. But she must renounce her sins with her whole heart: she must detest them above all trils: The must even hate them worse than hell: she buft fly and abhor like a pestilence all such company,

or other occasions, as may expose her to the danger of relapfing into them: the must be absolutely and resolutely determined never more to return to them, upon any confideration whatfoever. This is being penitent, indeed: But to pretend to be true converts, without

leaving our fins, is all a mockery.

Confider adly, that the principal ingredient of the convertion of a finner, is the turning to God with his whole heart: as the principal ingredient of fin is the turning away from God. Wherefore the true convert must not only leave the husks of the swine, which he has hitherto fet his heart upon; but he must arise, and return to the embraces of his Father, with a contrite and humble, but loving heart, refolved henceforward to be the eternal fervant of his divine love. He must remember that many fins are forgiven to him that leveth much, Luke vii. And that he that has been the greatest debtor, is the most obliged to love with his whole heart that merciful creditor, who shews so much leve to him, in being fo ready to discharge him of his great debts. In a word, a constant adhesion to God, by love and obedience, must be the perpetual business of a true convert. His whole life, for the time he has yet to come, must be dedicated and consecrated to divine love. This is his best security for the remission of all his past fins: this is the best preservative from all that the fourer fin for the future.

Conclude to shew thyfelf to be a true convert from fin to God, by renouncing all thy criminal affections, and facrificing them all to the love of God; by hating what thou haft hitherto loved, and embracing with thy whole foul thy Lord and Saviour, crucified for the lave of thee not room for both to not say

falves before the eyes of his foul; and to hope, that the lame Cod, whose mercy has endured bing to boys in he the whole contacts has watched

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# To regular of February 7 . Produces tedro to

On the sentiments of a penitent sinner.

ONSIDER first, that according to the different fleps that are usually taken in the sinner's convertion, different fentiments and affections gradually take polletion of his foul. And first his faith, which was affeep before, awakened by ferious confideration, or by hearing the word of God, or by reading good books, opens his eyes to discover in part at least, how odious, how filthy a monster, has hitherto had possession of his foul; and what dreadful dangers have furrounded him, all this time he has been in fin; and still threaten him, with the worst of judgments from God, both for time and eternity. This, by the help of the Holy Ghost, produces in his foul a wholesome fear of the justice of God, and of that miserable death, judgment, and hell, which are daily overtaking unrepenting finpers. Now this fear is usually the beginning of the greatest conversions. O how hard must that sinner be. whom neither the fight of the fword of God, hanging over his head, nor of a miserable death, following close at his heels, nor of hell, opened under his feet and just ready to swallow him down can move to re-

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Consider 2dly, that the sinner being alarmed with the terrors of divine justice, seeks to find how he may escape these dreadful evils, that continually threaten him on every side; and how he may rid himself of his sins, the true source of all these evils. And here the mercy and goodness of God, and the precious blood of the Son of God, shed for poor sinners, present themselves before the eyes of his soul; and encourage him to hope, that the same God, whose mercy has endured him so long in his sins; whose goodness has watched over him all this while, preserving him from innumerable evils, and loading him with innumerable benefits; who has purchased this soul of his for himself,

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as fo dear a rate; and who has shed his own blood to wash him from these very sins; will certainly receive him, now he desires to return to him, (according to his repeated promises made to repenting sinners) as he has received millions of others, that have returned to him after sin. And in this hope, he firmly purposes to neglect no one thing, required on his part, towards obtaining the absolution and full remission of all his sins, and a perfect reconciliation with his God

Consider 3dly, that the sinner being thus encouraged, and resolved to go, and present himself before the throne of divine grace, and there to sue for the pardon of all his fins, through the precious blood of the Son of God, betakes himself to servent prayer, in order to obtain the necessary disposition of a contrite and bumble beart, without which there is no admittance to mercy and grace. This contrite and bumble heart is an excellent composition of three great virtues; viz. penance, humility and divine love; penance fills the foul with a horrour, and deep fense of forrow for fin committed, together with an ardent defire to abolifh it at any rate: humility obliges the foul to condemn herfelf, by reason of her manifold crimes, as worthy of all manner of evils, and unworthy of the least good; and to fit down in the very lowest place, as the most wretched, the most ungrateful, and the most abominable of all creatures: and divine love teaches her to confider and detest in her fins, not so much the evil they bring upon her, as their infinite malice; from the infinite opposition they have to a God, infinitely good in himself, and infinitely good to her; and their enormous outrages against the Son of God, incarnate for the love of her. With these sentiments the true penitent endeavours to prepare and dispose himself for the confession of his fins, and absolution from them. And this is that contrite amd humble heart, which God never despises. Pfalm. L.

Conclude if thou wouldst effectually turn from fin to God, to endeavour to walk in these steps; espe-

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relate to eternity; and to labour with all thy powerfor the acquiring of a contrite and humble heart.

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turned to bing after the And in this before he firmly purpoles to mid ruo rol sommed gried no on his part,

ONSIDER first, that sentence of our Lord; Luke xiii. 5, Except you do penance, you shall all perish. The virtue of penance always was, is, and ever will be, absolutely necessary for every foul, that: has at any time in life, fallen from God by wilful fin. Tis the only plank that can fave them after the shipwreck, they have made of their innocence. Aut panitendum aut ardendum, fays an ancient father; either penance, or hell-fire, there is no medium for wilful finners: they must choose one of the two. Sin must be punished either here or hereafter; either by the penitent finner, or by divine justice. Hence the preaching of penance to such as had fallen from God by sin, was. the great subject of the commission of the prophets,. in the old Testament, and of the Apostles and all apo-Itolick preachers in the new. Hence it was by preaching of penance, and of the necessity of bringing forth. worthy fruits of penauce, that St. John Baptift was to prepare the people for Christ, Matt. iii. and our Lord himself opened his mission with the same theme, Matt. iv. Because there can be no other way to come to God and a happy eternity, but either the way of innocence, or when we have stray'd from this, the way of penance.

Consider 2dly, that this virtue of penance does not only require of us that we should turn from fin to. God, by a change of heart, and by a change of life; but also that we should labour to make satisfaction to the divine justice, by voluntary mortifications of the sless, and other penitential exercises, for all the injuries; and affronts we have offered him by our sins; and that by this means we should endeavour to discharge according

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to unweak ability the debt we owe to God for them. is is properly doing penance for our fins ! this is hat divine justice always expects: this is what the hurch of God has always called for from penitent finners. We cannot be true penitents, without hating and detesting our fins above all evils, because they offend a God infinitely good; now this of necessity infers a hatred for this traitorous felf-love of ours, and for all its irregular inclinations and passions, as enemies of God and the foul, and especially a hatred for this finful flesh, that is so apt to betray us into this dreadful evil of fin. And hence again naturally flows, in all true penitents, a fincere and effectual defire of punishing themselves for their fins, a defire of chastifing this flesh by penitential exercises, and thereby doing their best to make satisfaction for their fins. This is, and ever was, one necessary ingredient of that virtue of penance, without which the finner could never be reconciled to an offended God.

Confider 3dly, how much this way of doing penance for our fins is inculcated in holy writ; where we are To often put in mind, of turning to God with fasting weeping and mourning; of doing penance in fack-cloth and ofher, and the like; and where we meet with divers instances of the mercy and favour God is pleased to shew to all fuch as exercife themselves in these voluntary mortifi-Cations and humiliations of the flesh, when they are accompanied, as they ought to be, with a penitential spirit. Here also we learn, that no assurance we can possibly have of the remission of our fins, is to exempt us from doing penance for them; when we fee that King David, notwithstanding the prophet had affured him that the Lord had taken away his fin, (2 Sam. xli, 13.) yet still "continued to do penance for it, as we find by his pemitential plaims; which inform us, that his fin was always before him; that he washed every night his couch with his rears; that he laboured in his groans; that he mingled after with his bread, and tears with his drink &c. O let us imitate this glorious in force for many hundred years, by which insthish

conclude, if thou woulds be a true friend to the own soul, not to be afraid of hurting this sinful fless, which is the greatest enemy, but to keep it in subjection, by voluntary mortifications, and to chassise it for its past misdemeanors by penitential austerities.

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On the manner of doing penance for our fins.

ONSIDER first, that the true manner of doing penance for our fins, is not to be learnt from the maxims, or from the common practice of the children of this world; who fear nothing more than the hurting of themselves, or the contradicting of their own humours, appetites, and inclinations; and therefore this bringing forth fruits worthy of penance, is to them a hard faying, which they cannot endure to hear. But the true manner of doing penance for fin, is to be learnt of the children of light, that is, from the doctrine, and practice of the Saints: who, as they had quite other ideas of the evil of fin, than worldlings have; so also they had a very different way of thinking, and of acting, in regard to penance; as they have demonstrated by the penitential aufterities, to which they have condemned themselves, all their life-time, for expiation of the punishment due to their fins. And what are fo many religious orders, in the church of God, in which fo many thousands of both sexes, retiring from the world, dedicate themselves to daily mortifications and penances, but as many standing memorials, and living inflances, of that true manner of doing penance, which the spirit of God usually inspires to those whom he convinces of fin, that is to lay, whom he makes fenfible of the heniousness of the evil of fin, and how much ought to be done for the expiation of it.

Consider adly, how this same spirit of God dictated to the ancient church those rules and ordinances, commonly called the penitential canons, which were in force for many hundred years, by which penitent sinners

finners were subjected to divers fasts and other humiliations, for three, seven, ten, and sometimes for fisteen years, or more, for one mortal sin, and yet did not thinkthey did too much. O how ought this to convince sinners, that there is something more to be done for the remission of their sins, than they have hitherto been aware of! For though, according to the modern discipline of the church, these penitential canons are not now enforced: yet as God is still the same, and sin is still as heinous in his eyes, as it was in former ages; so the sinner stands no less indebted appresent to the divine justice than formerly, and therefore ought to think upon discharging this debt, in the best manner he is able, by frequent fasting and other corporal mortifications, as well as by alms-deeds, and long continued.

prayer.

Confider 3dly, that there are three particular practices of penance, which ought never to be forgotten, by any fuch as have, at any time in life, been guilty of mortal fin. The first and principal is, that they should go daily in spirit to the feet of Christ, to wash them with penitential tears, flowing from a loving heart; and there earneftly beg pardon for all their past offences, through his precious blood. The second, which will naturally flow from the first, is, that having their fine thus always before their eyes, they thould daily offer up. to God, in penance for them, some voluntary mortifications of their own will, humour, or appetite; at least, in lesser things, if they have not the courage or Brongth to undertake greater. For instance, that they should, in this spirit, rife early in the morning; retrench superfluities in eating, drinking, fleeping and divertions, and mortify, upon every occasion, their vanity, curiofity and fenfuality. The third is, that they should also offer up daily for their fins, in a penitential spirit, all the labours, to which their state of life is exposed, with all their pains and fufferings of every kind, which they may have to endure in life or death; to be united to, and fanctified by, the labours and fufferings of the Son of God; confidering themselves all the while as under a course

course of penance laid on them by the Almighty for their sins; and going through it, with humility, patience, and courage. Whosoever shall diligently persevere in the practice of these three things, will be allowed of one day as true penitents; and receive the crown of true penitents; though their circumstances of life, strength, or health, may not have admitted of any other penitential austerities. But no condition of life, or other circumstances whatsoever, ought to dispense with any sinner, from these three most easy, and most wholesome exercises of penance.

Conclude upon doing penance for thy fins, in the best manner thou art able, now whilst thou hast time before thee; lest otherwise thou be surprized and overtaken with the night, and may'st then wish in vain to have done penance, when time shall be no

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## hand on her February 10.

On the parable of the sower. Luke viii. Being the gospel of Sexagesima Sunday.

ONSIDER first, in this parable, the infinite tiches of the goodness and bounty of the Son of God, who, without diffinction, or respect of persons, fows to plentifully the feed of his word, and of his graces, on all kind of foils. This feed is heavenly! 'tis capable of producing fruit a hundred fold : he himfelf is the fower; and he himfelf waters with rain from heaven the feed he has fown: and yet three parts in four of this divine feed are loft, for want of a correspondence in the foil. Christians, see in what manner you receive the feed of God's word: fee how you conrespond with the divine graces and calls: your eternal falvation is here at stake. If you bring forth good fruit, agreeable to this divine feed; you shall live on it for endless ages, in the kingdom of heaven: But if you fuffer the foil of your foul to be like a beaten highway; or like a rock, covered but with a thin furface

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of earth; or like a ground over-run with thorns and briars; the feed of God will be lost upon you; and you will be answerable for the loss of it; and misera-

ble for all eternity.

Confider adly, what is here meant by the highway; where the feed is troden under foot, or pickt up by the birds: and fee how nuffly all fuch fouls are compared to a bighway, or a beaten path, as live in the forgetfulness of God, and in a continual diffipation of thought; fo as to become a mere thorough-fare for every parfenger that pleases; that is, for every idle amusement, that offers itself; for every impertinent or finful imagination; without any fence at all of the fear of God, or any care to keep off those wicked spirits, signified by the birds, which are ever upon the watch to catch away this divine feed of God's word, that lies thus unregarded on the furface of the foul. But what is the remedy for this evil? No other, to be fure, than to plow up this ground, that has hitherto been made a highway; to fence it in, in fuch a manner as that the pallengers may have no longer liberty to be continually trampling it under foot; and to harrow it so that the feed may be covered by the earth, and lie no longer exposed to be a prey to the birds. For a highway, or beaten path, as long as it remains such, can never bring forth fruit. Now in the spirtual sense, we plow up the foil of the foul, by daily meditations upon eternal truths; we fence it in, by a spirit of recollection; and we preserve the divine seed, which is to make it fruitful, from our spiritual enemies, by letting it fink deep into our fouls; and there guarding it, by watching and prayer,

Consider 3dly, who they are that are meant by the rock, or flowy ground, where there is no depth of earth, nor proper moisture to nourish the seed, so as to bring the fruit to maturity: viz. such souls as receive indeed the word of God; and are moved by it, to make some good resolutions, and some stender efforts towards bringing forth the fruits of a new life; but the rock of their old bad habits, (which they have

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never heartily renounced) hinders the feed from taking root: their resolutions are but superficial, they do not fink in deep enough to reach, or change the heart, but, upon the first opposition or temptation they wither away, and die. The remedy here must be to procure that this rock may be foftened, by the means of a long continued application to mental prayer, and other spiritual exercises; till those old habits are brought to give way to the fear and love of God; which are capable even of breaking the rock in pieces, and of changing, it into fprings of water.

Conclude to be ever attentive to the gracious calls of the word of God, and of his heavenly infpirations; and to let this divine feed fink deep into thy foul by daily meditation now with I be hard manager to show

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sufficience feen virale a On the remaining part of the parable of the focuer.

ONSIDER first, that there remains a third kind of foil, which brings no fruit to maturity: viz. the thorny ground; which receives indeed the feed of the divine word; but fuffers it not to grow up, and to ripen, but over powers it, and chokes it up with the thorns, which are its natural produce, and which have taken a much stronger root therein. which thorny ground are meant all they, who hear the word of God, or are otherwise favoured with the vifits of his graces and calls; but are fo unhappy as to fuffer all this heavenly feed to be over-powered, and choaked up with their carnal affections and lufts; or. as our Saviour fays, with the cares and riches, and pleafures of this life; and fo grild no fruit. Luke viii. 14. O fee my foul if this be not thy misfortune. Reflect how often thou half been vifited with graces from heayen! How often thou half heard, or read the word of God? And what fruit has this divine feed hitherto produced in thee ! It is well if, instead of the encrease of a hundred fold, it has not been rendred absolutely fruitle's.

fruitless, if not pernicious to thee, by the thorns of thy disorderly affections to the things of this world, which thou hast loved more than God.

Confider 2dly, that thorny ground can never bring any fruit to perfection, except the thorns be first rooted up: for fince they are much stronger than the corn, and have taken a deeper root in this unhappy foil, (in confequence of the curse laid upon our earth by occasion of fin, Gen. iii. 17, 18.) as long as they are fuffered to occupy the ground, they will of course overpower, and choke up the good grain. Wherefore, if we defire to bring forth fruit, and that the feed of the word, and of the grace of God, should not be lost upon us, we must seriously apply our souls to the rooting out these thorns of our irregular affections to worldly toys, and fenfual pleasures: for as long as these are predominant in our souls; the seed of heaven will bring forth no fruit there. Now this rooting out of these thorns is the proper business of the virtue of felf-denial, that is, of the daily mortification of our pafsions and natural inclinations, which are ever prone to evil; and, if not kept under, hurry the foul into all kind of vice, and stiffe all the graces and inspirations of heaven. This then must be the care of every Christian, this our daily labour, to keep these thorns under, that they may not over-power the feed of the word, and of the grace of God in our fouls. And whatfoever we affect or love, to the prejudice of the love of God, or of our duty to him, we must look upon as thorns, and discharge from our souls, as mortal enemies to the feed of heaven, and to our true welfare, either for time or eternity.

Consider 3dly, that the Christian must endeavour to be the good ground, in which the seed of God's word yieldeth fruit an hundred-fold: that is, he must labour to be of the number of those, who with a good and perfect heart, hear the word and keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience. He must hear it with a good heart; not out of idle curiosity, but for his own instruction and edification; notto carp at it, or criticize upon it; butto

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let it fink into his foul, for the reformation of his life. He must hear it with a perfect heart, embracing it as the word, and truth of God, brought to him from heaven by the Son of God, and defigned to carry him to heaven. He must keep it, by laying it up carefully in his mind; and often meditating upon it: he must ever follow its light, and regulate all his steps by it? He must bring forth fruit, with it: by exercifing him! felf daily in those virtues which it recommends, and advancing continually, by its direction, in the love of God, and in the way of Christian perfection: And this fruit he must bring forth in patience; that is with constancy and perseverance, notwithstanding all the difficulties and oppositions, he will be fure to meet with from the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Conclude to rid thy foul of all the thorns that may hinder it from bringing forth fruit to God; that thou mayst be the good ground that may yield a hundred

fold.

## February 12.

## Against delay of repentance,

CONSIDER first, that of all the tricks of saevernal ruin, there is none more common, or more dangerous, than this by which he perswades them to put off their repentance and their conversion to God from time to time, till there is no more time for them. Alas ! thousands and millions of poor souls have been thus betrayed, into that bottomless pit, of never ending wo, where the worm never dies, and the fire is never extinguified; who thought as little of damning themfelves, or of dying in their fins, as any one now living blo but by putting off their conversion, they have gone on provoking the divine justice, till by a just judgment of God, they have been cut off, when they leaft expected it; and dying as they lived, have been juftly entenced to that second and everlasting death, Una happy wretches, who would not believe the just judge,

who has fo often warned them to watch; and affured them that otherwise he should surprise them, like a thief in the night, when they least expected him. Ah! how dreadful and how common are these judgments!

Consider 2dly the insupportable affront, that sinners offer to the divine majefty, when being invited and pressed by his heavenly graces to a reconciliation with their offended God, they put him off till another time; shutting their ears to his sweet calls; and refufing him the entrance of their hearts, where he stands and knocks. Alas! If he withdraws himself, they are undone for ever: and how dare they treat him with fo much contempt? Is it not an infinite goodness in him, to have already suffered them so long in their fins, to have restrained the sword of his justice from falling upon their guilty heads; to have kept them fo long out of hell, hanging as they were all the while over this bottomless pit, and supported only by a slender thread of a brittle life, which he held in his hand? Is it not an inexpressible condescention in his divine majesty, after their repeated treasons, to allow them any conditions of peace and reconciliation at all? How much more to call after them, when they are running away from him; and to press them so earnestly to return to him; whereas he has no need at all of them; but only seeks their welfare? But what then ought they not to apprehend from his justice, if they still refuse his offers of mercy; and slight his graces and calls? Can any punishment be too great for fo much infolency, for fo much obstinacy, and for fo much ingratitude? O! let them give ear to his threats by the mouth of the wiseman. Prov. i. Because I have ealled, and you have refused to hear. I have stretched out my hand, and you would not regard me. bave despised all my counsels, and neglected my reprebenfions. Therefore will I also laugh at your des truction, and will mock, when that which you feare shall come upon you. Then shall they call upon m and I will not hear, &c.

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Confider 3dly the monstrous presumption the sinner is guilty of, in wilfully perfifting in fin, upon the confidence of a future conversion. Wretch that he is, how dares he pretend to dispose of the time to come, when he is not mafter of one moment of it? Or how has he the affurance to promise himself greater graces hereafter, than those he abuses at present. Does he not know that God alone is the master both of time and grace? And that he has neither promifed the time nor grace of a true conversion hereafter, to any one of those who put off their repentance at the present? So far from it, that he has often fignified to fuch presumptuous finners, that they shall neither have the time, nor the effectual grace which they promile themselve; but that they shall be surprised, and die in their fins. According to that of the wifeman Ecclef. v. 8, 9. Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day: for his wrath shall come on a fudden, and in the time of vengeance he fall deftroy thee.

Conclude never to expose thy dear foul, by any delays, to the dreadful danger of dying in thy fins: but if at any time thou hast reason to apprehend thou hast lost the grace of God, by sin; use thy best endeavours to be reconciled out of hand. 'Tis a dreadful thing to be an enemy of God, though it were to be only for one night. That night may be thy last: therefore never venture to lie down to fleep, under the

guilt of mortal fin.

## February 13.

On the folly of deferring our conversion to God.

ONSIDER first, how foolish it is for the sinner, when called, when invited, and pressed, by the best of Fathers, to return to him; to choose rather to continue a flave to fatan, for to feed his swine; and to prefer the husks of swine, which can never satisfy him, before his Fathers table, and the happy liberty

of the children of God. Ah! poor wretch, open thy eyes, and see how strangely thou art deluded? Thy God prossers thee his mercy, his grace, his favour, the honour of being his child, his spouse, his temple, a share in his heavenly treasures; his peace, his comforts, his table, his kingdom, his Holy Spirit, in a word, himself, and all that is good: And thou art so blind, and so mad, as to desire him to keep all his savours for another time; and to make choice for thyself at present of the extremity of all misery; by choosing to go on yet awhile under the dreadful guilt of mortal sin, a wretched slave to satan, sin and hell.

Can any madness be comparable to this?

Consider 2dly, how vain and foolish are those pretexts, by which finners fuffer themselves to be imposed upon, when they defer their conversion to God: especially with regard to pretended difficulties in the undertaking, which would all prefently be put to flight, and vanish away; if they would but once heartily fet their hand to the work. But what is the most common delufion, is that they vainly imagine, they thall do it more eafily another time. A dreadful delufion indeed! fince both reason and daily experience must make it evident, that the longer this work is deferred, the harder it is to bring it about. And how should it be otherwise; fince by these delays, and by continuing to add fin to fin, their finful habits grow daily stronger upon them, and consequently harder to be rooted out; the devils power over them daily encreases; and God Almighty, provoked by their repeated abuses of his graces, and their obstinate impenitence, withdraws himself further and further from them; and fuffers them by degrees to fall into that blindness and hardness of heart, which of all evils is the most difficult to be cured.

Consider 3dly, the folly of all such as put off their conversion to God, through the apprehension of the confession of their sins; and choose to suffer for a long time the gnawing worm of a guilty conscience, with all the other evils that always attend on mor-

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tal fin; and to be continually exposed to the danger of death and hell, and to all the judgments of an offended God; rather than to undergo a small confufion, that would last but one moment, and would immediately be followed with unspeakable comfort, and with a speedy pardon, reconciliation, peace, and grace. Would not all the world condemn that person of the greatest folly and madness, who labouring under a most painful, and mortal diftemper, should refuse an easy, fafe and fovereign remedy, only because it was difagreable to the palate, just for the moment of the taking of it? But O how much more unaccountable is the folly and madness of the sinner, who for fear of so small an humiliation, as the confession of his fins, to a minister of God, tied by the laws, both of God and man, to an eternal fecrecy, refuses all the medicines of heaven, under a mortal disease, which is hurrying him on towards an eternal death; and chooses rather to risk his all, for eternity, than to discover his illness to his physician?

Conclude not to suffer the enemy to impose upon thee, with any of his deceitful wiles; so as to induce thee to continue playing upon the brink of a precipice, with the sword of God hanging over thy head. No prudent person would refuse to be immediately reconciled to a man whom he had offended, who had the power and authority, to condemn him to a cruel death, for his offense: how much less should the sinner put off his reconciliation with an offended God, who can in an instant cast both his body and soul into hell; and who is highly provoked by

his impenitence.

### February 14.

On deathbed performances.

CONSIDER first, that if it be so great an evil, to defer, for any considerable time, ones conversion to God, and ones reconciliation with him; it

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must be an evil incomparably greater, to form a premeditated defign of putting it off, to the end of our life, upon the confidence of a deathbed repentance: because the risk, the prefumption, the madness, the outrage offered to God in this case is incomparably greater: So that it is well, if one in a thousand of them, that are guilty of fuch a formal defign of putting a cheat upon the divine justice, (by indulging themselves in fin all their life time, and then only thinking to make their peace with God, when they can fin no longer) ever meet with even the poor chance of a deathbed confession; much less with the grace of an effectual conversion. Oh! no: such sinners will find to their loss that God is not to be mocked : Gal. vi. \*. The general rule is that what a man foweth the same shall be reap: and that as a man lives, so shall he die. A rule fo general, that in the whole scripture we have but one instance of a happy death after a wicked life, viz. that of the good thief: an example fo fingular in all its circumstances, as to afford no kind of encouragement to fuch finners, as defign before hand, to give the flip to God's justice, by a deathbed convertion.

Confider 2dly, how very little it is, that the finner is capable of doing on his deathbed, towards his conversion; when either the dulness and stupidity, caused by his fickness, or by the quality of the medicines; or the pains and agonies, which he endures in body or in mind, render him quite unfit for prayer, and incapable of attention to reading; or of any ferious application of his thoughts to the great business of his soul. Alas! if a little headach, or any other flight indispofition, be enough to hinder us at any time from making any ferious meditation, or praying with devotion, how much less shall we be able to attend to prayer, or to do any thing else to the purpose, when we shall be furprized with a mortal illness, and with the pangs of death? O Christians let not yourselves then be imposed upon with vain imaginations of the fine acts of contrition, and of the love of God; that you will make

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make upon your deathbed: they will all fly away from you then: 'tis well if you shall then be capable even of one good thought. Thousands that have flattered themselves with the thoughts of doing fine things upon their deathbed, have been prevented by sudden death; thousands have been taken out of their senses, before they apprehended their danger; thousands have been flattered by those about them into a conceit that they were not dying, when they really were; and which is the most common of all, thousands, in punishment of their forgetting God in their lifetime, have been suffered to forget themselves in death: and thus generally speaking these fine projects of deathbed performances turn to smoke, and end in hell.

Consider 3dly, that the conversion of an habitual finner is at any time a very difficult task; and requires a strong grace; such as may reach, and change the heart, and effectually turn it from the affection of fin to the love of God: fo as to make it hate above all evils, what has been for a long time turned into a second nature, by the force of an evil habit; and to love and embrace with the whole foul what has hitherto been loathed, or despised. But if this talk be very difficult at all times; and feldom brought to effect, without long and ferious meditations, and much prayer: what a poor chance must there be for such finners, as have on fet purpose put off this work to the time, in which they are neither capable of meditation nor prayer; and which is worst of all, when in punishment of their obstinate impenitence, and insupportable presumption, God has withdrawn himself from them? Alas poor finner, thou flatteredst thyself in thy fins, that it would be easy for thee at any time (how late foever) to make thy peace with God, and to escape hell; because thou hadst heard, that in whatsoever hour the sinner shall turn to God, he will shew him mercy: but then the devil hid from thy eyes, that this effectual turning to God, especially upon a deathbed, must be the fruit of an extraordinary grace of God, which he has promised to no man; yea a very

great miracle of grace, which he is seldom disposed to work in favour of such presumptuous wretches, as have made a practice all their lifetime of mocking of him.

Conclude to have no dependance upon the deathbed performances of habitual finners: no, not even though, like Antiochus, they should shed tears plentifully: these are often insluenced by the sear of death, more than the love of God. Take thou care of one at least, by living always, for thy own part, as thou desirest to die: and exhort all that belong to thee, to secure their souls, by this same method: 'tis the only safe way.

#### February 15.

On the dispositions with which we are to enter upon the service of God. From Ecclus ii.

ONSIDER first, and diligently attend to those words of the wiseman Ecclus. ii, 1. Son, when thou comest to the service of God, stand in justice, and in fear, and prepare thy foul for temptation : and learn from these prescriptions of the Holy Ghost to enter upon the service of God, with a strong resolution of not being discouraged with the opposition thou shalt meet with from the world, the flesh, and the devil; and with a determination to stand thy ground in this spiritual warfare, like a valiant foldier; putting on the armour of Christian justice, and of the fear of God: according to that of the Apostle, Eph. vi. 13, &c. Take unto you the armour of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect. Stand therefore having your loins girt about with truth (that is, with fincerity in your intention towards God) and having on the breaft plate of justice (that is, of Christian virtue, with a full determination, at all events, to be true to your God) in all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one; (by a lively sense of God and eternity) and take unto you the helmet of falvation. (that is, an humble confidence in God;) and the sword of the Spirit

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fpirit, which is the word of God: viz. by frequent hearing, reading, or meditating on divine truths. And being thus prepared for the fight, you will not fail of gain-

ing the victory." I have red diver red by or of smes

Confider 2dly, what the wifeman further prescribes to all that defire to fucceed in this glorious enterprize; which is to bring us to God, and to eternal life. Humble thy heart, fays he, and endure; (that is, suppress, and keep under, all the irregular rifings of thy pride and passion, that shall offer to oppose thy undertaking:) wait on God with patience, join thyself to God and endure, that thy life may be encreased in the latter end. Take all that shall be brought upon thee; and in thy forrow endure, and in thy humiliation keep patience. For gold and filver are tried in the fire, but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation. Excellent lesions, not only for beginners, but for all that are on their journey towards heaven! for croffes, fufferings, and humiliations are the portion of all the fervants of God: and patience and courage in advertities, humbling ourfelves under the hand of God, and a perfect refignation to his holy will, ferve to qualify all our afflictions, and to make them light and easy, as well as infinitely advantageous to our fouls. O how happy are they who have learnt what it is to join themselves to God, in all they have to fuffer! O what a happiness is to be found in enduring. in his company, and with an entire conformity to his bleffed will! what an encrease will this give to our life in the latter end; by adding to it a happy eternity!

Consider 3dly, that one of the most excellent dispositions for attaining to all good, and the most effectual means to begin well, to advance daily, and to continue to the end in the happy service of God, is to conceive, and to nourish in the soul, a great esteem for a virtuous and devout life, an earnest desire of being good, a hunger and thirst after Christian justice; in a word, an ardent love for true wisdom, which indeed is no other than the knowledge, love, and service of God. I wished, says the wiseman, Wisdom vii. 7. and understanding was given me, and I called, and the spirit of wisdom came upon me: and I preferred her before kingdoms and throness and esteemed riches nothing in comparison with her. -- I loved her above health and beauty, and all good things came to me together with her, and innumerable riches through her hands. --- For she is an infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God. O how glorious are the things that are said, both here, and in many other passages of the divine oracles, of this heavenly wisdom! O how lovely, how desirable, is this treasure, this precious pearl of virtue and devotion, which is the truest wisdom! who would not give all things else to purchase such an inestimable jewel? But behold the wisest of men, yea the Spirit of God by him, assures us, that we need but defire it, seek it, and love it, with all our hearts, and it shall be our own.

Conclude to observe all these heavenly lessons; and they will not fail to bring thee to God. He earnestly desires to make thee happy, by making thee his true servent; if thou desirest the same, how canst thou miscarry; provided thy desire be servent and perseve-

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### February 16.

#### On true devotion.

the most happy of lives, and the most secure way to an eternal life. For true devotion is the very perfection of charity and love; she is the queen of virtues. But beware, O my soul, of the errour of such false devotes, as make all devotion consist in certain external exercises, destitute of the internal spirit; or in huddling over a number of prayers, or in frequent fastings, disciplines, or hair shirts; or in giving alms; or in frequenting the sacraments; or in following some other religious practices, which happen to be agreeable to their inclinations; though they remain all the while unmortised in their passions, full of self-love, and void of all true charity, either to God, or to their neighbours;

bours: whereas true devotion cannot be without keeping of all the commandments, but more especially those two, of loving God above all things, and our neighbours as ourselves.

Consider adly, that to be truly devout, is to give onefelf truly to God, according to the original meaning of the word devotion, which fignifies a dedication and confecration of one-felf to God. So that true devotion confifts in always feeking God, and tending to him, in embracing in all things his holy will, and ever loving and obeying his holy law. He that does this, is truly devout; but he that does not love the will of God. better than his own humour, is not devout, although he prays all day long, and sheds floods of tears. Confequently, he that is a flave to any of his passions, he that entertains a rancour to any one of his neighbours, he that fets his heart upon the world, and its toys, more than God, can never be truly devout, because he wants the very foundation of true devotion, which is loving God above all things. As to those other things mentioned above, they are often the attendants of true devotion, or its effects: but then devotion does not confift in any of them, and they may often be found in fuch as have no true devotion, no true charity, nor even true faith; without which no one can please God, Heb. xi.

Confider 3dly, that true devotion is not always fenfible, nor does it confift in certain sensible tendernesses. which fome people experience in prayer; whilft others. who perhaps in the fight of God are much better Christians, meet with nothing for a long time but dryness and defolation. Some persons are of a more soft and tender nature, and are easily affected even unto tears: and yet withal are very superficial in the love of God; quickly forget their good resclutions of serving him; easily yield in the time of temptation; shrink under every crofs; and never arrive at folid virtue: and where is their devotion all this while, fince it dries up, like their tears, in a moment, and brings forth no fruit? How much more devout is that Christian, who continues constant in prayer, though he finds no sensible comfort therein; because he wants

therein; who goes not to prayer to feek his own pleafure, but to please his God, and to glorify him; who is willing to take up the cross, and to help his Saviour in the carriage of his cross, by bearing, for the love of him, the dryness and desolation that he endures; without leaving his accustomed exercises: in a word, whose prayer is a conformity of his own will to the will of God. O this is devotion indeed: but sensible consolations, without this conformity, deserve not the name of devotion.

Conclude to make no account of any feeling of devotion, that is not accompanied with charity, humility, and conformity to the will of God; and thou wilt be fure not to be imposed upon, as great numbers have been, by false appearances, and phantoms of devotion, to the danger of the loss of their precious souls.

## February 17.

on the opposition there is between the world and the Gospel. For Shrove-Tide.

ONSIDER first, that 'tis not for nothing that the Son of God in the Gospel, so often declares against the world, as a capital enemy of him and his: because light and darkness are not more opposite than the world and the Gospel.- The maxims and practices of the one are quite contradictory to the other. The world perpetually recommends what the Gospel condemns, and condemns what the Gospel recommends. The world is made up of pride, ambition, and vainglory; the Gospel breaths nothing but humility, selfcontempt, choosing the lowest place, and becoming as little children: affuring us that otherwise there is no heaven for us. The world inspires a covetous spirit, the love of mammon, and a fondness for worldly toys; the Gospel inculcates the necessity of despising all these things, and of quitting all things, at least in affection, to follow Christ. The world is a slave to sensual pleafures,

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fures, and places its whole happiness in gratifying and indulging its own humours and inclinations: the Gofpel requires, as the very first and most necessary condition to be a disciple of Christ, that we should deny ourfelves, hate our own humours and inclinations, and take up our cross, and follow him. The world imagines them bleffed, that abound the most with worldly honours, riches, delicacies, pastimes, and other worldly enjoyments, and have no one to thwart or contradict them. The Gospel, on the contrary, pronounces them. bleffed that are poor in this world, that fuffer injuries and affronts with meekness, that weep and mourn, and that are reviled and perfecuted by men. In a word, the life of worldlings is a perpetual contradiction to the Gospel of Christ. And the life of Christ, and of all the true children of the Gospel, is a perpetual censure of the world, and its maxims. See, my foul, which thou hadst rather follow, the world or the Gospel; the broad way, or the narrow; the way of perdition, or the way of life.

Confider 2dly, that Christianity never had a more dangerous enemy than the world; and never yet fuffered half so much from all the persecutions of infidels, that have been from the beginning, as it continually suffers from these false brethren, who, under the Christian name, are perpetually undermining the Gospel of Christ, and promoting the kingdom of Satan. The perfecutions of infidels made innumerable Saints, and ferved very much to purify, and to propagate, the church and kingdom of Christ: whereas, this war that is continually carried on by wicked Christians, against the morals and maxims of the Gospel, draws away innumerable fouls from Christ, corrupts the innocence even of the best inclined, enslaves them to Satan and fin, and condemns them to hell. O let us beware of this mortal enemy of our falvation, this torrent of worldly custom, these pernicious maxims of a deluded and deluding world.

Consider 3dly, with relation to this very time of Shrove-tide, how wide a distance there is between the

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true spirit of Christianity, and the practice of the children of this world. The church fets aside this time for a time of devotion and penance, that it may be a fuitable preparation for the folemn fast of Lent; therefore she puts on at this time her penitential attire; she calls upon her children to enter into a penitential dispofition; to renounce now their evil ways, and to confess their fins; that, by removing these rubs out of the way, they may be properly prepared for meeting with mercy and grace, at this approaching time of mercy and grace. The very name of Shrove-tide, in the ancient English, fignifies the time of confession of sins, because our catholic ancestors were taught to turn to God, at this time, with their whole hearts, by humble confession and penance. But Ohow fadly has the spirit of the world perverted this pious institution, and turned this time of devotion and penance into a time of riot and fin; even of fuch excelles and extravagances, as would much better fuit with the heathenish festivals of Bacchus, than with any Christian folemnity; much less with a preparation for a penitential fast. Beware thou, my foul, of conforming thyfelf to the world, in any of its extravagances at this time, left by joining now with this enemy of God, and of thy falvation, thou come to lose both thyself, and thy God, for all eternity.

Conclude to give ear to the divine oracles. Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him, I John ii. 15. The friendship of this world is the enemy of God: Whosever therefore will be a friend of this world, becometh an enemy of God, James iv. 4. And fince the world of God thus expressly declares, that there can be no such thing as being a friend both to God and the world, keep off from the love of the world, and from its maxims and customs, lest thou

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#### February 18.

On fighting under the standard of Jesus Christ.

CONSIDER first, that there are upon earth, and have been all along, two opposite kingdoms, two opposite interests, two opposite cities, Jerusalem and Babylon, the city of God, and the city of the devil; two opposite standards, that of Jeius Christ, and that of Satan. From the time that man unhappily fell from God by fin, Satan set up his tyrannical usurpation: which he has, by all kind of tricks and lyes, endeavoured to maintain ever fince; by alluring poor deluded mortals with the glittering shew of worldly pomps, riches, and pleasures, to become his flaves, and to fight under his standard; and by establishing amongst them his laws and maxims, calculated for nothing else but to make them miserable both for time and eternity. And ah! how unhappily has he prevailed over millions! what multitudes every where join with him against their God! how is this wretched Babylon spread over all the earth!

Confider 2dly, that Jesus Christ came into this world, to fet up his standard, in opposition to the standard of Satan, and to invite all men to follow him; promising to deliver his followers from all their evils. and to impart to them all his good. They that duly correspond with his call, and join his royal standard. make up the city of God, the bleffed Jerusalem, the church of the Saints. But see now the immense difference between these two opposite cities and their inhabitants; how happy the one, and how miferable the other. The children of Babylon are miserable indeed: they are flaves to passions that can never be satisfied: to a world that can never be contented: to infernal tyrants, that are continually dragging them along with them towards hell: they are flaves to empty vanities, childish toys, and lying follies; labouring under a variety of fears, cares, forrows, uneafineffes, and innume-K 2 rable rable other evils, without enjoying so much as any one solid or lasting satisfaction. But O how happy are the children of Jerusalem! what content, what peace, what pure pleasure in the soul, are commonly their portion, even in this life; and immortal joys in the next! and shalt thou, my soul, stand one moment to deliberate, which of the two thou wilt choose; the standard of Christ, or that of Satan; Jerusalem or Babylon; all good, or all evil; verity or vanity; happiness or mise-

ry; heaven or hell?

Confider 3dly, that all manner of motives, from time and eternity, from our origin and last end, from duty and interest, honour and pleasure, fear and love, all here concur to determine the foul in her choice, and to fix her in the happy resolution of following the standard of Jesus Christ. Turn then, my soul, turn away from this Babel of confusion, noise, and disorder: break her chains from off thy neck, O captive daughter of Sion. Renounce, for good and all, the king of pride; the tyrant that has usurped to himself the dominion over this world, and its deluded admirers: renounce his works and pomps, together with all his affociates, the princes of darkness, and all their slaves : and turn thyself to the bleffed Jerusalem, the city of peace : embrace the king of peace, and his glorious standard, with all thy heart; choose him for thy king for ever; pay him irrevocable homage; and promise him inviolable fidelity and obedience.

Conclude, fince thou haft now chosen Jesus Christ to be thy king, to fight manfully unto death, under his royal standard of the cross, against his and thy enemies, the world, the slesh, and the devil. In order to this, learn well thy exercise of prayer, and the rules of the gospel, which are the military discipline, which he has

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#### February 19.

On the rules prescribed by Jesus Christ to bis followers.

ONSIDER first, the laws of the military discipline which Jesus Christ prescribes to all that defire to be his foldiers, Mat. xvi. 24. If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. The observance of these three articles makes a complete foldier of Christ. We must renounce ourselves; we must bear our crosses; and we must walk in the foot-steps of Jesus Christ. The corruption of man by fin; the wounds that fin has left in all the faculties of the foul; the violence of our diforderly paffions; and the bent of our natural inclinations to evil infer a necessity of renouncing ourselves, of fighting against ourselves, and of hating our natural inclinations? if we hope to be happy either here or hereafter. We have not a more dangerous enemy than ourselves; the devil himself cannot hurt us half so much as we hurt ourselves, when we follow our own will, and indulge our dwn inclinations. The denying, therefore, of ourfelves, is the first article of the discipline of Jesus Christ, in opposition to our unhappy self-love, the root of all our evils, and its three principal branches, the luft of the Helb, the tuft of the eyes, and the pride of life. The Son of God came down from heaven, to engage us in this holy warfare. The humility, the poverty, the voluntary fufferings of his birth, of his life, and of his death, were all levelled against these enemies.

Consider 2dly, that the soldier of Jesus Christ must stand to his colours; he must not run from the cross. He must bear and forbear; he must endure many conslicts; he must patiently submit to, and couragiously go through, the labours and hardships of this short campaign of his mortal life. He must not pretend to fare better than his captain and his king. All sufferings and hardships appear as nothing to a brave soldier, when he

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is following his prince, and is happy in his company. The Christian foldier then must be willing to carry his cross after Jesus Christ, who opened heaven to us by the cross, and conducts his foldiers thither by the way of the cross. Embrace then, O my soul, this happy instrument of thy falvation, in which, if thou bearest it in a proper manner, thou wilt find an inexhauftible fource of grace and comfort. Embrace the holy will of God, which lays the cross upon thee, to bring thee to himself. He knows what is best for thee, because he is infinitely wife, and he fends thee what he knows is for the best, because he is infinitely good, and good to thee. Thou canst not be in a safer or better way than in the way of the cross, by which Jesus Christ and all his Saints have gone to heaven. Even in this life, the true foldiers of Christ find often a greater sweetness in the cross, than in all the pleasures of this world.

Consider 3dly, that the soldiers of Christ are all called, even as his first disciples were, to follow him; that is, to walk in his foot steps, by an imitation of his life. He came down from heaven to be our teacher, and our model; and 'tis the great duty of all that desire to belong to him, to copy after his blessed original, and to shew forth in themselves the life of Jesus Christ: To learn of him to be meek and humble of heart: To learn of him poverty of spirit, a contempt of the honours, riches, and pleasures of this world, and a disengagement of the heart from all earthly things: to learn of him a horrour for sin, and an obedience even unto death: in sine, to learn of him, a perpetual conformity to the will of God, and an unbounded charity to every neighbour. Such was the life of Jesus Christ, and such ought

to be the life of all his foldiers.

Conclude to embrace henceforward this discipline of Jesus Christ, in all its parts. 'Tis a heavenly discipline indeed; since he came down from heaven to teach it; and the observance of it is to bring us to heaven.

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twentieth of February, sometimes begins before the twentieth of February, sometimes after; when it begins before, the meditations that are not read at this time are to be read in June, after the octave of Corpus Christi: as on the other hand, when Lent begins later than the twentieth of February, the meditations that shall be wanting here, are to be taken out of the number of those that are placed in the month of June after the aforesaid octave.

Here follow meditations for the feasts of St. Matthias, St. Joseph, and the Annuntiation of the Blessed Virgin, which commonly fall in Lent.

#### February 24.

On the gospel for the feast of St. Matthias.

ONSIDER first, how our Lord, rejoicing in the Holy Ghoft, Matt. xi. 25, &c. addressed himfelf to his heavenly Father in these words: I give thanks to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things (the great truths of the Gospel) from the wife and prudent (of this world) and haft revealed them to little ones. And learn thou, my foul, to admire and adore in this the wonderful ways of the wisdom of God, who ever resists the proud, and gives his grace to the humble; and therefore withdraws and hides himself, and his truths, from such as are pufft up with the conceit of their own wit or learning, or any other talents, whether natural or acquired: whilft he discovers his secrets to the little and humble; fills their fouls with his heavenly light, and works his greatest wonders in them, and by them. Thus he did with regard to his Apostles: and thus we shall generally find, that the humble and fimple have been the inftruments, in the hand of God, of all the great works he has wrought in the conversion and fanctification of souls. O bleffed be his name for ever, who thus delights in shewing his power in weak vessels; and chooses the contemptible things of this world, to confound our pride! O teach me, dear Lord, to be ever little and humble!

Confider 2dly, how fweetly our Lord, on the same occasion, invites us to himself; saying, Come to me all you that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. Alas! we all labour in this vale of tears: 'The days of this world are fhort and evil, full of forrows and miseries; where man is defiled with many fins, ensnared with many passions, assaulted with many fears, disquieted with many cares, distipated with maony curiofities, entangled with many vanities, furrounded with many errors, broken with many hardships and fatigues, troubled with many temptations.' Kempis. And is not all this labouring and being heavy laden ? Yes, there is a heavy yoke, indeed, upon the children of Adam, from their coming out of their mother's womb, untill the day of their burial into the mother of all, Eccluf. xf., But what remedy then for all thefe evils? We must run to Christ, and he will refresh us; he will comfort, and relieve us. We must take up his yoke upon us, and he will refcue us from the flavery of fin and Satan; he will qualify all our other labours and miferies; he will give us the victory over all our passions and temptations; and we shall find rest to our soals. For his yoke is foret, and his burthen light.

Consider 3dly, that our Lord here invites us also to learn of him, to take him for our master, and to become his scholars. A great honour indeed, to have the Son of God come down from heaven to be our teacher! But what then are we to learn of lo great a master? Are we to learn of him to make heaven and earth; or to rule and govern the whole universe? Or are we to learn of him to work all kind of miracles, and to raise the dead to life? O ho: but we are to learn of him, to be meek and humble of heart. This is the great lesson the king of heaven came down to teach us. In learning this, we shall find a remedy for all our evils. No one but he could effectually teach us this lesson. Could we even raise the dead to life, it would be all nothing

nothing, without learning to be meek and humble of heart,

and overcoming paffion and pride.

Conclude, O my foul, to comply henceforward with this sweet summons and invitation of thy dear Lord, and to run to him, and put thyself in his service: that, with his gracious assistance, thou mayst cast off from thy shoulders the heavy yoke of the world, the sless, and the devil; and take up his light yoke, and rest in him for ever.

#### March 19.

#### On St. Joseph.

ONSIDER first, the testimony that the Holy Ghost has given to the virtue and sanctity of St. Joseph, in telling us in the gospel that he was a just man. And doubtless the Almighty would never have made choice of any man to be the chaft bridegroom of the purest of virgins, and the foster-father and guardian of his own divine Son, that was not confummate in purity and fanctity. Learn from hence, Christian souls, what kind of qualifications will make you also agreeable to Jesus and Mary: you will certainly drive them far away from you by criminal impurity. Admire the command St. Joseph had of his passions, in his joining perfect continence with the state of marriage; and in the evenness of soul, which he preserved under all events, how adverse soever: and learn of him to keep thy passions under subjection, and chearfully to submit thy will in all occasions to the appointments of heaven.

Consider 2dly, the great examples St. Joseph has given us of all other virtues: his lively faith, in a ready submission of his soul to the belief of the most difficult mysteries, relating to the incarnation of the Son of God: his ardent love of his dearest Jesus: his concern and tender care for him in his infancy and childhood; and his wonderful diligence in all that belonged to his charge: his meekness and charity to the Blessed Virgin,

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when, to his unspeakable surprize, he found her with child: his ready obedience, without demur or reply, to every intimation of the will of heaven; whatfoever hardships or labours it might put him to; as in the case of his flight into Egypt: his patience underafflictions and perfecutions: his humble submission, notwithstanding his royal extraction, to the toil and labour of a handicraft, to gain a poor livelihood for himself, and for Jesus and Mary, with the fweat of his brow: together with an amiable fimplicity in his whole comportment, and a perpetual attention to God, by divine contemplation. Christians, let us imitate his virtues, whatsoever our station of life may be: we see by his example, that perfect fanctity may be found even in the midst of the diftractions of a worldly calling: and that if we are not Saints, 'tis not the fault of our calling, but of our not corresponding with divine grace. St. Joseph found a great advantage to his foul from his having Jesus always in his company, and working with him: O let us also take care to have Jesus always with us, (wherever we are, or whatever we are doing) by a spirit of recollection, and a conftant attention to him; and never to drive him away by any finful conversation; or by entertaining his enemies in our interiour; and we shall quickly be sensible of the fruits his presence will bring to our fouls.

Consider 3dly, and learn from the example of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, how great an errour the world lies under, when it slies with so much eagerness from poverty and labour, as conceiving them to be great evils; which the wisdom of God made choice of for himself, for his blessed mother, and his reputed father: and which they have consecrated by their life and practice. As for thy part, my soul, have another way of thinking; and if thy condition be that of the rich, be not pussed up with it; but rather humble thyself to see thou art so unlike to that blessed family; and fear the many dangers that riches are exposed to: despise not the poor, but ever honour and succour them, as the relations of Christ, or as Christ himself: thou hast his authority

for doing fo. If thou art poor, remember thou wearestthe livery of Christ, and of his Family: comfort thyfelf in the refemblance thou bearest with them; and take care left, by thy murmuring or impatience, thou lose any of the advantages which thy state entitles thee to. If thou followest any trade or handicrast, take St. Joseph for thy patron, and for thy pattern. Thou seeft, by his example, that fanctity is not inconfiftent with thy business. But then take heed, lest by any fraud, or injustice, or by an excessive solicitude for the things of this world, to the neglect of thy foul, thou banish Jesus from thy shop or house. Be sure to make him the companion of all thy labour; offer up all thou doest to him; and often entertain thyself with him. If God has bleffed thee with children, take care, by an early diligence, to form Christ in them, by constantly instilling into their tender minds the fear and love of God, and the horrour of fin: thus thou mayst, like St. Joseph, bring up Jesus, in these little ones.

Conclude to honour St. Joseph, by an imitation of his virtues: and, in order to this, implore the affistance of his prayers. His interest is great with our Lord; as St. Teresa declares she frequently experienced. Beg in particular his intercession, for the obtaining of a happy death. St. Joseph was happy in death, by having our Lord and the blessed Virgin to attend and assist him. Let us, like him, keep ever close to

them in life, and they will be with us in death.

#### March 25.

On the Annuntiation of the bleffed Virgin.

ONSIDER first, how the Angel Gabriel (Luke i. 26 &c.) was sent from God into a city of Galilee called Nazareth, to a Virgin, espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the Virgin's name was Mary. And the Angel being come in said to her, Hail full of grace, te Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women. And when she had heard,

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The was troubled at his faying, and thought with herfelf what manner of Salutation this Should be. And the Angel faid to her: Fear not Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the most High, and the Lord God sholl give unto him the throne of David his father; and he shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Christians give attention to this most facred and most solemn embassage, sent from the king of heaven, not to any of the great ones, or potentates of this world, but to a poor and humble maid: to treat with her upon the highest matters; even upon the great business of the Incarnation of the Son of God, the establishment of his everlasting kingdom, and the redemption and falvation of man. Admire and adore the depth of the wisdom of the ways of God, (so much exalted above the maxims, and ways of the worldly wife) by which he is pleased to bring about such great things, without noise, or pomp, in so humble a manner, and by fuch humble instruments. And give thanks for that infinite goodness and love for us, which he has shewn in the mystery of this day.

Confider 2dly, the great leffons, the Bleffed Virgin teaches us, by her whole comportment on this occasion. She is favoured with an embassage from God: she is greeted by one of the highest of the Angels, as full of divine grace: she is told that the Lord is with her, and that the is bleffed among all women; and instead of being pufft up with these high favours, or taking any vain complacency in these titles and encomiums, she is troubled at the words of the Angel, and, through the humble fentiments the has of herfelf, wonders what should be the meaning of such a salutation. She is affured by the Angel that she has found grace with God; and is chosen by him, to conceive and bear the Saviour of the world, even the Son of the most High: and fo great is her love for virginal purity, that the is ready to forego the dignity of mother of God, rather

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than part with her virginity. How shall this be done, saith she, because I know not man? As being consecrated by vow to God; and determined to keep my vow. The Angel informs her, that she shall conceive by the Holy Ghost, and be overshadowed by the power of the most High, so as still to remain a pure maid. And then with a most profound humility, and a most perfect oblation of herself to God, and an entire conformity to his blessed will, she cries out: Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word. Let us study well, and learn of her the practice of these great lessons, of humility, love of purity, and perfect resignation of ourselves to the will of God.

Confider 3dly, how as foon as the bleffed Virgin had thus given her confent, the immediately conceived by the Holy Ghoft; who by his almighty power, formed a body out of her purest blood, and created an immortal foul for that hody; and this body and foul were. in that instant assumed, and united to the eternal Word, the Son of God, the second person of the adorable Trinity. And thus, was celebrated in the Virgin's womb the facred wedding of our human nature with the divine person of the Son of God, to the feast of which we are all invited, Matthew xxii. Thus the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us, St. John i. This great mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God is the original fource of all our good: in making God man, it has made man God. The Son of God by taking upon him our humanity, makes us partakers of his divinity. He comes to be our Saviour and our Redeemer, to deliver us from all our evils: he comes to be our advocate, and our phylician: he comes to be our father, and our friend: he comes to be our king, and our prieft, and to make us kings and priests to his Father. He stoops down to our dust, to raise us up from the dust, and to bring us to fit down with him in his throne. Apoc. iii. 21. See then, my foul, in what manner thou oughtest to celebrate this great festival of the conception of the Son of God? VOL. I.

What homage and adoration; what praise and shanks giving thou owest him for these wonders; he has wrought in thy favours: what return of love for his love to thee? O welcome him at least to the best of thy power; and since he comes to dwell amongst us; beg he would accept of the lodging of thy heart.

Conclude to keep forever in thy foul, a faithful, grateful and loving remembrance of the mystery of the incarnat on of the Son of God; and a fincere affection for his Virgin Mother: And with these dispositions, frequently in the day repeat the angelical salutation; more especially at the regular hours of the morning, moon and night.

## On Ashwednesday. Sold sold

his prophet in the lesson of this day. Be converted to me, saith he, with all your heart, in sasting, and in weeping, and in mourning: and rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God, Joel ii. 12, 13. Christians, hearken to this summons from heaven. O let it sink deep into your souls: and if this day you hear the voice of God, sweetly inviting you to return to him in good earnest, now at this holy season, harden not your hearts; lest provoked by your impenitence, he turn away from you, and you die in your sins. O let us repent and amend, as we are admonished by the church on this day, whilst we have time, lest being overtaken by death, which is ever following at our heels, we should seek for time of penance, and not be able to find it.

Consider 2dly, the meaning of the ashes which are put on our heads this day with those words. Remember man that thou art dust: and into dust thou shall return. Sackcloth and ashes were the ancient habit of penitents. The Ninivites by fasting in sackcloth and ashes found mercy. Let these ashes then, which we receive on our heads, at the beginning of this passitential fast, be a lesson to us, to enter upon it with

of contrition and humility: let us receive them with a contrite and humility: let us receive them with a contrite and humble heart. They are also a rememberance of our mortality; of our frail composition, and of our hasty return to our mother earth. O let us think well on this; and renounce henceforward our unhappy pride and presumption: O let us make good use of this our short time, and prepare for that moment, which shall e'er long send away our souls into another region, and turn our bodies into dirt and dust.

Consider 3dly, Christian soul, those words, as if they were addressed to thee, yet forty days, and Ninive shall be destroyed. Jonas iii. 4. Alas! have not thy sins, like those of Ninive, called to heaven this long time for vengeance? And hast thou not too much reason to fear, lest the mercy, which thou hast so long abused, should now quickly give place to justice, and should suffer thee to die in thy sins. Perhaps this is the last reprieve, that God will grant thee. In all appearance the good use or the abuse of these forty days may determine thy lot for an eternity.

Conclude then to spare no pains to avert the judgment that hangs over thy head; and so to spend thele forty days of reprieve, in suing for mercy, after the manner God has appointed, that is, by fasting, weeping, and mourning, that thou mayst effectually find it

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# Thursday after Ashwednesday. On fasting.

CONSIDER first, how much fasting is recommended to us, in the word of God, by the great example of Christ, and of his Saints, as well of the old as of the new testament; how we are there called upon to turn to God, with fasting. Joel, ii. How the greatest sinners, have there found mercy by fasting. Jonas iii. How we are there taught that all Christ's children are to fast during his absence from us. Sc. Matt. ix. 15: and that the devil is not to be cast out, but by prayer and fasting, St. Mark ix. 28. Man sell from God originally by intemperance; he returns to him by fasting. The gratifying our sensual appetite betrays us, both to the slesh, and to the devil: we overcome them both by fasting: by which (as the church daily inculcates in the presace for Lent) God restrains our vices and passions, elevates our souls to himself, and bestows upon us his heavenly gifts and graces. O happy sasting which drivest away all our evils, healest both soul and body; and bringest us to our sovereign good!

Consider 2 dly, that there are three great advantages found in fasting. First it appeales the wrath of God, provoked by our sins: Inasmuch as by fasting for them, weaknow-ledge our guilt; and take part with his justice, in condemning and punishing ourselves. For there is nothing sooner moves God to shew us mercy, than the homage we pay to his justice, by exercising a wholesome severity against the wretch that has dared to offend God. O let us conceive a just indignation against this sinful stesh! Let us not spare the traitor, that has so often betrayed us into sin! Let a penitential fast be

our regular exercise.

Confider 3dly, that another great advantage of fasting is, that we are enabled by it to overcome our passions and concupifeences. Fasting, when performed with a due spirit, humbles the soul exceedingly, and consequently restrains the irregular motions of all the passions that are the daughters of pride. It keeps the stell in subjection, by depriving it of the principal nourishment of its rebellions and disorders; and obliges it to submit to the spirit. And which is a third advantage, in proportion to its weakening the passions of the stell, it gives strength and vigour to the soul; sets it at liberty from the clogs that hinder its free application to hear wenly truths; and enables it to sy upwards towards God, by purer prayer and contemplation.

Conclude to fet a due value on this wholesome excercise, which has been the favorite of all the Saints u

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and has greatly contributed to make them the favourites of heaven. But take care that your fasting be accompanied with its proper attendants, that it may be such a fast as God has chosen.

## Friday after Ashwednesday.

On the rules of fasting.

ONSIDER first that fasting, according to the present discipline of the church, implies three things. First we are to abstain from flesh meat, on fasting days: secondly we are to eat but one meal in the day: and thirdly we are not to take our meal till about noon. The ancient discipline of the church was more rigorous, both in the point of the abstinence, and in not allowing the meal in Lent till the evening? These regulations are calculated to mortify the sensual appetite, by penance and felf-denial. If you find fomedifficulty in the observance of them; offer it up to God for your fins. Fasting is not designed to please, but to punish. Your diligent compliance on this ocu casion with the laws of your mother the church, will also give an additional value to your mortification, from the virtue of obedience.

Consider 2dly, that we must not content ourselves with the outward observance of these regulations, that relate to our diet, on fasting days: but we must principally have regard to the inward spirit, and what we may call the very foul of the fast; which is a penitential spirit. Without this the outward observance is but like a carcafs without life. This penitential fpirit implies a deep fense of the guilt of our sins, a horror and deteftation of all our past disloyalties and treasons; and a hearty forrow for them; a fincere defire to return to God, and to renounce our finful ways for the future; and particularly a readiness of mind to make the best fatisfaction we are capable of to divine justice, by penancing ourselves for oursins. Fasting, performed in this spirit, cannot fail of moving God to mercy. O and

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Confider 3dly, that fervent prayer, and almsdeeds alfo, according to each ones ability, ought to be the inseparable companions of our fasting. These three fifters should go hand in hand, Tob. xii. 8. to help us in our warfare against our three mortal enemies, the flesh, the world, and the devil. The practice of these three eminent good works we must oppose to that triple concupience, which reigns in the world, and by means of which Satan maintains his unhappy reign. By fasting we overcome the lust of the flesh : by almsdeeds, we subdue the lust of the eyes, by which we are apt to covet the mammon of the world, and its empty toys: and by fervent and humble prayer we conquer the pride of life, and put to flight the devil, the king of pride. O let us never forget to call in these powerful auxiliaries to help us in our warfare. Let almsdeeds and prayer ever accompany our fasts.

Conclude to follow these rules if you defire your fast should be acceptable: if you fail in them, it will

not be fuch a fast as God hath chosen.

### Saturday after Ashwednesday. On the great fast of a Christian.

ONSIDER first that the great and general fast of a christian is to abstain from fin. This fast obliges all forts of persons, young and old, fick and healthy, at all times, and in all places. To pretend to fast, and yet to go on in wilful fin, is a mockery, rather than a fast. What were the Pharisees the better for their fasting, while their fouls were corrupted with pride, covetoufness, malice, and hypocrify? Did not God reject the fasts of the Tews (Ifaias Iviii.) because on the days of their fasting, they continued to provoke him by their cuttomary fins? And will he be better pleased with us, if we, in pretending to fast, are guilty of the like disorders ? No

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Let the wicked man for sake his way, and the unjust man bis thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and then he will have mercy on him, Hai. lv. 7.

Confider 2dly, that the true Christian fast should not an only put a restraint upon the sensual appetite, in point or of eating; but also extend itself to a more general mortification of every one of the fenses and faculties; in, and by which, we have been liable to intemperance, or excefs. The eyes, the ears, the tongue, and so of all the reft, ought likewise to fast, from curiofity, sensualty, vanity, carnal pleasures, idle conversations, theatrical fliews, and other worldly and fenfual divertions, unbecoming a ferious Christian penitent at all times; but much more on days of fasting. But especially we are warned, Ifai. lviii. 3. on the days of our fasting, to fast from our own will, humour, and passion, as that, which of all things is the most opposite to the fast which God hath chosen. O my foul, fee thou take good notice of this leffon. Beware left thou break thy faft, by undulging felf-will, pride, and passion. of blood had

Confider 3dly, and weigh well the description given by the prophet Isaias, chap. lviii, of the fast that is acceptable to the Lord, and of its happy effects in the Is not this (faith the Lord) the fast that I have chosen? Loose the bands of wickedness --- and break afunder every burden. Deal thy bread to the hungry, and bring the needy and the harbourless into thy house: when thou shalt fee one naked, cover him, and despife not thy own flesh. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall speedily arise, and thy justice shall go before thy face. Then shalt thou call and the Lord Mall bear, &c. If thou wilt take away the chain out of the midst of thee, and cease to speak that which is good for nothing. When thou shalt pour out thy foul to the bungry, and shalt satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rife up in darkness. -- And the Lord will give thee rest continually, and fill thy soul with brightness --- And thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a fountain whose waters shall not fail.

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faffy to break thy bands afunder, and to put away from thee the chains of fin; and then, by exercifing works of merey, thou thyfelf wilt be entitled to mercy, and to all that is good.

# On the fast of Lent.

ONSIDER first, that a fast of forty days has been recommended by the law, and the prophets, and fanctified by the example of Christ himself. Moses fasted forty days (Exod. xxiv. 18.) whilst he conversed with God in the mountain, when he received divine law. And again, when the people had finned, he returned to the Lord to the mountain. and fasted other forty days, Exodus xxxiv. 28. Elias fasted forty days in the wilderness, before he came to the mountain of God; where he was favoured with the vision of God, as far as man is capable of feeing him in this life, 3 Kings xix. 8. Christ our Lord, before he entered upon his mission of preaching his Gospel, retired into a wilderness, and there employed forty days in prayer and fasting, St. Matt. iv. 2. How happy shall we be, if, by imitating, according to our small ability, these great examples, we may also draw near to God, by this forty days fast of Lent! But then, in order to this, we must join, as they did, retirement and much prayer with our fasting.

Consider 2dly, that the forty days fast of Lent, amongst Christians, is primitive and apostolical: it began with Christianity itself; and, with Christianity, has been received by all people and nations which have received the faith and law of Christ. Embrace then, Omy soul, this solemn penitential fast, this apostolical practice, this precious remnant of primitive discipline. But see it be with a penitential spirit. Behold now is the acceptable time, behold now is the day of salvation, 2. Cor. vi. 2. Take thou care not to receive so great a grace in vain. These forty days, if thou make good use

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Confider adly, that the great business of Lent is to do penance for our fins: to go daily with Magdalene to the feet of Christ; to wash them in spirit with penitential tears to make our confession to him, and to lay down all our fins at his feet, begging that he would cancel them with his precious blood: to renounce them for ever; to detest them, and to bewail them in his fight; to offer him our poor hearts with all our affections, in order to make him the best amends we can, for our past disloyalties, by loving him with all our power for the time to come; that, as he faid of Magdatene, St. Luke vii. Many fins are forgiven ber, bear cause the bath loved much; to he may also say of us. In this spirit we should make a daily offering of our fasting, and of all the other felf-denials, and penitential exercices of this time, to be united to the passion and death of the Son of God, and fo to be accepted of through him, in latisfaction for our fins. O do this, my foul, during these forty days, and thou shalt live

Conclude to make good use of this holy time, in which mercy slows. O admire and adore that mercy which has endured thee so long, and which presses theely now at least, to return to thy God. O take care, less provoked by thy impenitence, he cut thee off in thy sins to be be a second at the control of the c

# Monday after the first Sunday in

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ONSIDER first, that, besides the great business of idelines penance for the fins of the year, and of our whole lives, which is the main design of Lent is also instituted to be, in a particular manner, a time of devotion, in which we may worthily commemorate the sufferings and death of our Redeemer, and make them the subject of our daily meditations. In which also we

dispose our souls for duly celebrating the great past hab solemnity, and imitating therein the resurrection of the Son of God: and in which we may insuch manner cleanse and purify our souls by spiritual exercices, as to be set to approach worthily (as the church commands us) to the divine mysteries at Easter. See, my soul, thou keep Lent in such manner as to answer these ends.

Consider 2dly, that Lent is a time which God particularly claims for himself; as being the tithe of the year, which therefore ought to be set aside for him: As in the law he appointed that the tithes of all things should be sanctified to him, Leviticus xxviii. And surely nothing could be more just, than that we should offer our tithes, at least, to him that gives us all. How justly then does he require of us the tithes of our years, by our dedicating, these forty days, in a special manner, to his service? How religiously then, and how holily ought we to spend this time of Lent, that our performances may answer this great design of consecrating the tithe of the year to the divine service? An offering made to God ought to be without blemish: let out

Confider 3dly, that the time of Lent ought to be for people that live in the world, what a spiritual retreat is for regular communities. That is, a time in which, retiring as much as may be from the noise and diffrace tions of the world, they may enter into thenselves, and take a ferious view of the whole flate of their interiour. Now is the time for them to fee and examine how the foul flands affected, with relation to her God, to her neighbours, and to herfelf: how the acquits herfelf of all her duties, as well those incumbent on all Christians, as those that are proper to her respective calling, or relative to those under her charge. Now is the time to fearch diligently after such fecret line as are apt to lie lurking in the foul i difguifed by fome pretext of good, or wrapt up under the folds of felf-love. In a word, now is the time to acquire a true knowledge of ourfelves, in order to apply a proper remedy to all out evils,

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eviles and to day a folid foundation of a good diferion the future are and and addison the future are and and addison the future are and addison to be a sold to

able, all these ends of the institution of Lent; and particularly apply thyself at this time to take as it were in pieces the whole method of thy life, and to reform all that thou findest amiss, and as another method of the life.

## Tuesday. To all substitution Tuesday.

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On the examination of the state of our interiour.

ONSIDER first, the dreadful mischiefs that fold low from our not knowing the true state of our own fouls. Alas! what would it avail us, to have all other sciences, and to know all things else, if we should not know what passes within ourselves, and so should want this most necessary of all sciences, the knowledge of ourselves. Ah! how many are there in the world. who pass their whole lives in mortal sin; and yet, for want of looking into themselves, are not aware of it! How many imagine themselves to be alive, and bave the name of being alive, and yet are dead! Apoc. iii. 1. How many imagine their fouls to be rich and wealthy, and to fland in need of nothing, and they know not, that in the very truth, and in the fight of God, they are wretched, and miferable, and poor, and blind, and naked. Apocilii 1700 from my hidden fins cleanfe me O Lordin and for the fins of others spare thy fervant, Pf. xviii. 136 W Confider adly that, to prevent fo great an evil even ry Christian ought often to examine into the true state of his interiour, and to confider feriously what are the real dispositions of his soul, especially with regard to his God. WHe cannot be in the state of grace, or in the way of falvation, if he love not God above all things. Reflect, O my foul, is there nothing thou lovest more; than God? Is there nothing that takes place of him in thy affections? How comes it then, that commonly God is fo feldom thought on, in the course of the day ! How comes it that, upon every occasion, worldly hom

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nour, temporal interest, sensual pleasure, the gratifying thyself, or the world, makes thee turn thy back on him? The true lover is ever thinking on the object of his love, and never better content than when in company, and conversing with his beloved. Is thy love of God such as this? Art thou resolutely determined, for no consideration whatsoever, for no honour, no interest, no pleasure, no human respect, no fear, no love, for nothing, in fine, that the world can give, or take away, to be disloyal to thy God? If not, the love of God is not in thee, and thou art none of his. This is the best rule, by which thou mayst know, whether thou really lovest God, or no. But then, to know thy true disposition in this regard, examine thy works. If you love me, faith the Lord, keep my commandments, St. John xiv. 15.

Confider 3dly, that thou must also examine, how thy foul stands affected with regard to thy neighbour. For here is another great branch of the Christian's duty, in which his foul is no less interested, and in which too many deceive themselves. O my foul, art thou just in thy thoughts, words, and works, to thy neighbour? Dost thou live up to the rules of charity in his regard? Art thou not cenforious in thy judgments; bitter in thy fpeeches; hasty and passionate in thy carriage to him? Doft thou never injure him in his reputation, by backbiting and detraction; in his honour, by affronts; in his friends, by tale-bearing; in the peace of his mind, by derifion or contempt? Art thou just in all thy dealings with him? Dost thou pay him his dues? Dost thou keep nothing from him unjustly? Dost thou do by him, in whatever station of life he may be, as thou wouldst be done by, if thou wert in his case? Is there no rancour in thy heart against any one soul upon earth? No fecret hatred, malice, or envy? Examine thyfelf well upon all these heads, in which millions affect to deceive themselves, to their eternal perdition.

Conclude to labour feriously for the knowledge of thyself, that thou mayst effectually amend thy life, and secure thy soul. For why shoulds thou suffer thyself to be any longer blindfolded by passion, or affected ig-

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norance, with evident danger of falling down the dreadful precipice which leads to a miferable eternity.

### Ember-Wednesday, first week in Lent.

On a further examination of the foul.

ONSIDER first, that we must also examine the state of our fouls, as to hidden fins, and as to such fins as we may be guilty of in others; for, in these kinds, many are guilty of great disorders, while they flatter themselves that all goes well with them. Few, indeed, are ignorant of their carnal fins; though, even in these, sometimes persons deceive themselves: but very many take little or no notice of their spiritual fins, which are more interiour; and, though less infamous in the eyes of men, are more hemous in the fight of God: fee then thou examine thyfelf thoroughly upon these heads; for spiritual fins are commonly very fubtle, and not eafily differred, without a diligent fearch. Nay oftentimes fuch as are the most guilty, will not believe themselves guilty of them. These spiritual fins are of one of these five kinds, viz. pride, covetousness, envy, secret malice, and spiritual sloth. Look into them one by one, and if thy felf-love will fuffer thee to be impartial in thy fearch, in all appearance thou wilt find thyfelf more guilty than thou art aware db tur ut all tay dealto

Consider 2dly, in particular, how full thou art of thysels; how fond of every thing that flatters thee; how presumptuous of thy own sufficiency; how apt to compare thyself with others, in thy thoughts, and to give thyself the presence; how apt to despise others; how unwilling to suffer any reproof or contradiction; how ready to swell with indignation upon every trifling opposition or contempt; how apt to break out into a storm upon every supposed affront; how much concerned at what the world will think, or say, of thy performances; how much more solicitous for thy worldly honour than for the glory of God. And what

what is all this but an unhappy pride, which is laying waste thy foul, and corrupting its very vitals, whilst thou art insensible of it. See also, as to covetousness, whether the love of the mammon of the world does not reign in thy heart. Alas, the greatest miser does not think himself covetous! but the tree is to be known by Its fruits: fuch as an anxious care and a perpetual folicitude about the things of the world; and upon this ac count neglecting prayer, and other spiritual duties; or being continually diffracted in them; thinking more of thy money than of thy God; locking up thy heart in thy chefts; lofing thy peace upon every loss or disappointment; and a strange unwillingness to part with thy money, even when the honour of God, or thy neighbour's necessities call for it. See if nothing of this be thy cafe. See if thou art not more afraid of lofing thy worldly substance, than thy God. If so, thou art not in the way to heaven? It was a select the course of the

Consider 3dly, as to the other spiritual fins; whether there be no person for whom thou hast a secret envy? No one whose praises, whose endowments, corporal or spiritual, whose virtues, or performances, make thee uneafy, and gnaw thy foul, as if their advantages were a leffening to the honour, praife, and efteem which thou affectest? O! how common is this mortal crime; and how many detractions and other evils does it produce! and yet how many take very little notice of it! is it not thy case? Then as to secret malice, rancour, and haz tred, how dost thou stand affected ! Look well into thyfelf; for here again we are too apt to deceive our Telves: but we must judge of the tree by the fruits; that is, by our way of thinking, speaking, and acting, with relation to our supposed enemies. Now there is so very wide a difference between the fruits of charity. and those of malice, between love and hatred, that if we are fincere in our examination, we cannot well be deceived therein. And as to spiritual soth, which is a clog upon the foul, infinitely opposite to the love of God, to the spirit of prayer, to a due care in frequenting the facraments and other duties; is not this alfo a TUILLY most

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most common evil, which frequently amounts to a more tal fin! and yet how feldom do lukewarm fouls take notice of it?

Conclude upon declaring an eternal war against all these vices; and particularly against that which thou hast reason to apprehend is thy predominant passion, that is to say, the chiefest and most dangerous of all thy enemies.

### Thursday in Ember-Week.

On other fins which we are to examine into.

ONSIDER first, that, in order to know the true state of our fouls, we must also examine how we discharge ourselves of all our duties; and not only of all fuch duties as are common to all Christians, but also of all such as are particularly incumbent on us in our station of life. Alas! how many take notice of their fins of commission, but not of their fins of omission How many make fome account of such duties as relate to the regulating themselves; but are not concerned to fee that others under their charge, ferve the Lord! How many examine themselves upon the commandments of God, and the precepts of the church, as far as they appertain to all Christians in general; but pass over the particular duties and obligations annexed to their calling, or state of life; to which nevertheless they are strictly bound either by law, or by covenant, or by oath, or by the very nature of the calling. Reflect thou my foul on all these things. The grand duty of man, the great end for which he came into the world, his whole bufiness in life, is to dedicate and confecrate his very being and his whole life to the love and fervice of his maker. All thy days O man are given thee for this end. The omission of this great duty is highly criminal: 'tis usually the first fin that man falls into. And yet how few fufficiently reflect on it. Alas how many millions of fouls are loft by this omission; who though they are neither guilty of blafphemy nor murder, nor adultery, nor theft &c. are M 2 justly Hom

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fully condemned for the omission of dedicating them-

Confider 2dly, Christian foul, what care thou takest of thy children, of thy fervants, and of all under thy charge. The regularity of thy own life, will never bring thee to heaven, if, through thy negligence of them, their lives be irregular. Reflect well on this; and fee if thou art not guilty of many criminal omiffions in this kind. Again reflect on the particular obligations annexed to thy calling: and how far thou performest what the law of God, or man, requires of thee in thy station; for example, that of a pastor, a teacher, a lawyer, a physician, a tradesman, a servant, &c. See whether thou makeft good thy covenants? And if any oath were required at thy first admission, or afterwards, fee what care thou haft taken to discharge thyself of the obligation of it? Alas how many, in entring upon their respective callings, take certain oaths, and afterwards perhaps think no more of them! And can this be the way to heaven? See then how necessary it is that a Christian, who has a mind to secure his Toul, should look well into himself.

Consider 3dly, whether thou hast nothing to appre-hend with regard to thy salvation, from the sine of other men? And this not only from thy omiffions; or thy neglect of restraining those under thy charge from fin, or of keeping away from them the occasions of fin. But because of thy commissions too, in promoting or encouraging fin by word or work; in enticing, or provoking to fin; in flattering or applauding people in their fins; and in contributing to keep up the pernicious maxims of the world, in point of honour, interest and pleasure, by which numbers of poor souls are enflaved to fin, and dragged into hell. Reflect withal how little guard thou generally half upon thy words, in thy ordinary conversation, and whether thy carelefnels therein may not frequently be attended with very bad consequences to the souls of thy neighbours, by giving them some occasion or other of fin, either in thought, word, or deed? Alas! how many fins will be brought to light in the great day, which care-

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less fouls in the time of this life but little apprehend; and so continue till death, in the guilt of them.

Conclude to make such good use of the spiritual exercices of this time; and especially to study so well what passes within thee, as to be no longer blind to thy own sins, and a stranger at home. O my God! do thou give me grace, now at least, perfectly to know myself. O grant that I may renounce, and do penance for all my past sins, and henceforward settle my soul upon a more secure bottom, which may stand for eternity.

## Friday Ember-Week.

On exercifing works of mercy.

CONSIDER first, that in order to find mercy, we must shew mercy. Bleffed are the merciful, faith our Lord, for they shall obtain mercy. Matt. v. 7. And on the other hand, judgment without mercy, faith St. James, to him that bath not done mercy. Chap. ii. 13. God expressly rejects the fasts of them that refuse to shew mercy to their neighbours, Isaias lviii. He declares he will neither give ear to their prayers; nor accept of their facrifices. Prov. xxi. 13. Ifai. i. 11, 15, 16, 17, 18. If then, my foul, thou defireft at this time effectually to fue for the divine mercy, in the forgiveness of thy fins; see that thy fasting and prayer he accompanied with alms-deeds. If thou have much, give abundantly; if thou have little, take care even fo to be willing to bestow a little, Tob. iv. 9. This mercy and charity exercised by thee, will recommend thy fasting, and thy prayer to that God who is all charity, and whose tender mercies are above all his works.

Consider 2dly, how many ways, and upon how many occasions, the word of God, recommends alms-deeds to us. It promises an eternal kingdom in heaven, to all them that are diligent in this exercice and threatens with eternal damnation all them that are negligent, St. Matt. xxv. It shews that the definitive sentence,

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which is to decide our eternal doom, is to pass upon each one of us according to his behaviour in this respect. Ibidem. It encourages even the greatest sinners, to redum their fins with alms, and their iniquities with works of mercy to the poor, Daniel iv. 24. It affires them, that by the means of alms all things shall be made clean to them. St. Luke xi. 41, that alms deliver from all fin, and from death, and will not suffer the foul to go into darkness. Tob. iv. 11. That Christ considers what is done for the poor, as done for himself, and will reward it accordingly St. Matt. xxv. That he that hath mercy on the poor lendeth to the Lord, and he will repay him, Prov. xix. 17. To pale over many other texts, promifing all kind of good, both for this world and the next, to works of mercy; and threatning the hard hearted, and unmerciful with the worst of God's judgments. O! my foul attend to these heavenly oracles: embrace with all the affection of thy heart this lovely virtue of mercy, the favourite daughter of the great King. It was mercy brought him down from heaven to thee; and mercy must carry thee up to him thither.

Confider 3dly, the conditions that must accompany our alms, that they may be capable of producing thefe great effects. 1. They must be liberal, and proportionable to our ability: He that foweth fparingly shall reap but sparingly. What then can the worldling expect, who for every penny he gives to God, in the person of the poor, gives a pound to the devil, and to his own paffions and lufts? 2dly. Our alms must be given with a pure intention: that is, not out of oftentation, or vain glory; or for any other human motive; but for God's fake: otherwife they will have no reward from God. adly. Our alms can never effectually procure for us the remission of our fins; except we join with them a fincere repentance for our fins, together with an effectual refolution of loving and ferving God for the future. Christians, take good notice of these three articles: and particularly remember that neither alms, nor any thing elfe, can give any manner of fecurity to any man that wilfully perfifts in mortal fin.

Conclude

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occasion, this blessed virtue of mercy. But see that thy intention be pure: and beware of losing the benefit of it by an impenitent heart.

### Saturday in Ember-Week.

On the Spiritual works of mercy.

ONSIDER first, that the spiritual works of mercy, by which we relieve our neighbours in the necessities of their fouls, are of far greater value in the fight of God, than fuch as merely relate to their bodies. If then he is pleafed to promile fuch ample rewards, to the feeding the hungry, cloathing the naked, and fuch like good works, which relate only to these corruptible carcaffes, and to the fhort time of our mortal pilgrimage: how much more will he effeem and reward those works of mercy and charity, by which immortal fouls, made after Gods own image, and redeemed by the blood of Christ, are drawn out of darkness and sin, rescued from fatan and hell, and brought to God and a happy eternity? He that causeth a somer to be converted from the errour of his way, faith the Scripture, shall fave his foul from death, and shall cover a multitude of fins, St. James v. 20. And they that instruct many to justice, shall shine as stars for all eternity. Daniel xii. 3.

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Conclude

Consider 2dly, that the spiritual works of mercy are principally exercised: by reclaiming sinners from their evil ways, even the ways of death and hell, by admonitions, remonstrances, fraternal corrections, &c. by enlightening and instructing such as through ignorance, are in danger of losing their precious souls; or by procuring them this light and instruction from other proper persons; by comforting the afflicted; encouraging the pusislanimous, upholding and affishing them that are under temptations, reconciling such as are at variance, bearing with all; forgiving all, ever overcoming evil with good, and praying for all. O how happy; how precious in the light of God is a life spent in such

works of mercy and charity as these are! And how happy will that death be, that shall conclude such a life! O my soul, that we may lead such a life! O that

we may die fuch a death.

Consider 3dly, that these spiritual works of mercy, are not only the most acceptable of all, and the most meritorious in the fight of God; but also are of strict obligation: and this not only to pastors, but to all other Christians, according to their circumstances and abilities. Charity is a virtue of universal obligation: and the principal object of that love, which charity obliges us to have for our neighbours, is the eternal welfare of their immortal fouls. If then we can unconcernedly fee numbers of fouls crowding into hell, without affording them all the help that lyes in our power, in order to rescue them from that extremity of endless misery; is it not evident, that we have no charity for them; and if not? may not our case one day be as bad as theirs? What then must we do? We must gladly lay hold of every opportunity, of contributing what lies in us to the conversion and salvation of any one of these poor unhappy souls: and we shall quickly find that opportunities of this nature will not be wanting, if we take the matter to heart. At least there are two ways, and those the most effectual of all, of reclaiming finners, and bringing them to God; which are certainly in the power of every one; and from which no one can be excused: and these are the example of a holy life, and the efficacy of fervent prayer poured out to God in behalf of poor finners.

Conclude ever to make use of these two, the most effectual, ways of bringing sinners to God: Yet so, as not to neglect any other means that lye in thy power. What a comfort will it be to thee; what an honour, what a happiness, to be the instrument of God, in the salvation of souls; that same great work, which brought the Son of God from Heaven! But what dreadful punishments may'st thou not justly apprehend, if for want of this charity, any of these souls should perish, because thou wouldst not lend them a help-

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which they were running. Ah! will not their blood one day cry to heaven for vengeance against thee?

### Second Sunday in Lent.

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ONSIDER first, that the time of Lent is not only a time for falling, and giving alms; but is also in a particular manner a time of devotion and prayer. Fasting, alms and prayer are three fisters, which ought to go hand in hand, and with united forces, to offer a holy violence to heaven, which is not to be taken but by violence. If then prayer be at all times necessary; if it be the very life of a Christian foul; 'tis certainly a most indispensable part of our duty at this holy time. But what is prayer? It is a conversation with God: It is a raising up of the mind, and of the heart to God: It is an address of the foul to God, in which we present him with our homage, our adoration, praise, and thanksgiving; we exercise ourselves in his presence, in acts of faith, hope and love; and we lay before him all our necessities, and those of the whole world; begging mercy, grace and falvation at his hands. O my foul how happy it is, howglorious, how pleasant to entertain thyself thus with thy God! Is it not in some measure anticipating the joys of heaven? For what is heaven but to be with God? - 4120ard 100g has he had no box or had befund

Confider 2dly, more in particular, the most excellent advantages the soul enjoys by the means of prayer. It gives her a free access, whensever she pleases, to come before the throne of his divine majesty; and to make her addresses to him, at any hour of the day or night; with a positive assurance from him of meeting with a favorable audience: It admits her, as often as she pleases, into his private closet, where she may find him all alone, and treat with him with all freedom as long as she will; and she may be assured he will an ever never be wearied with her importunity, nor that the door against her. Will any prince of the earth allow any thing like this even to his greatest favourite? O Christian soul, what an honour is this! And why art

not thou more ambitious of it?

Consider 3dly, how delightful prayer is to the soul that truly loveth God. The true lover finds the greatest pleasure in thinking of, and speaking with the object of his love. If then the soul truly love God, nothing will be more sweet to her, than this heavenly intercourse and conversation with her sovereign good. The saints have found it so, when they have passed whole nights in prayer, and thought the time very short, through the delight they sound in the company of their beloved. O my soul if thou find no such delight in prayer, see if it be not for want of love.

Conclude to embrace this heavenly exercice of prayer, at all opportunities. Here is to be found thy greatest honour, interest and pleasure: and in a word, thy

whole happiness both for time and eternity. Signer sins

## Second Monday in Lent. so coll

On the necessity of prayer.

ONSDER first, that all Christians are indifpenfably obliged to prayer: because it is a homage and worship we owe to God He is our fift beginning, and our last end the is the inexhaustible fource of all our good: therefore he justly expects we fhould daily worship him; and daily acknowledge our total dependance on him, by a diligent application to him by prayer. We are all bound both by our creation and redemption, frequently to prefent ourselves before the throne of God, with acts of adoration, praise and thanksgiving : we are all bound to honour him, by frequent acts of faith, hope and loves sand it is in prayer, and by prayer, we perform these duties: they are all neglected, if prayer be neglected. It was appointed in the divine law, that twice every day, VIZ. mells

be offered in sacrifice, in the temple of God: as a daily worship, he expected from his people: and shall not the children of the new law be equally obliged, twice a day at least; to offer up their homage of prayer in the temple of their hearts. Daniel chose rather to be cast into the den of the lions, than not worship his God by prayer, three times a day. And shall not this convince Christians of the strict necessity of this exercice.

Confider 2dly, the necessity of prayer, in as much as it is, by divine appointment, the channel through which the graces, and bleffings of God are to flow into our fouls. We can do nothing, towards our falvation, without the grace of God: but with his grace we can do all things. Now prayer is the great means of procuring, and obtaining this all necessary grace: Afk, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. O how often is this repeated and inculcated in holy writ! How much are we there pressed to be earnest and fervent in prayer! Does our God then fland in need of us, or our prayers? No certainly. He stands not in need of us: but we continually stand in need of him; and therefore out of love to us, he is so often pressing us to pray: bebecause he sees that without frequent and servent prayer we must be forever miserable. Blessed be his name for this his infinite charity. or swo sw quifrow bas sgam

Consider 3dly, the necessity of prayer, from the warfare, in which we are engaged, the whole time of our mortal pilgrimage, with three most desperate enemies, the world, the sless, and the devil. We are surrounded with dangers on all sides, and with dangers that threaten us with nothing less than the loss of God and a miserable eternity. We walk in the midst of snares: our way is beset with robbers and murderers: we breath a pestilential air: we live in a world, that is very wicked; in the midst of wordlings, a deluded people, who are strangers to the gospel; who by word and work encourage sin; and seek to drag us along with

them into the broad road of perdition. We carry about with us a load of Reft, which weighs down the poor foul, and tyrannizes over her with its passions and lusts: these hold a correspondence with the third enemy the devil, and are ever ready to betray us to him, to make us his companions in never ending wee. We have whole legions of his wicked angels to fight against; erafty and malicious spirits, bent upon sparing no pains to destroy us. And what shall we do? Or what can we to, to escape all these dangers, and to overcome all thefe enemies? We must watch and pray! and God will watch over us; and give us the victory over them all. Prayer will engage God on our fides; and all out enemies shall fall before us : for if God is with us, it is no matter who is against us. ng by a ferrous, re

Conclude to have recourse to prayer in all dangers and temptations: and since our whole life is full of dangers and temptations, let us make our whole life; as

much as possible, a life of prayer. Which the little we are the first the second and the second seco

## Second Tuefday in Lent. his

### On attention in prayer.

dition to make our prayer either acceptable to God, or beneficial to ourselves, is a serious attention! It deserves not the name of prayer without it. To pray with wilful distractions, is a mockery: it is afficulting the divine majesty. This people, saith he, beneureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from the Isa xxix. See my soul if this be not the often thy case? And if so, seek a speedy remedy for so great an evil. There needs no greater to sink thee little the very depth of all misery for time and eternity. For as he cannot fail to live well, who has found the way to pray well: So he that prays iff, must not expect to live well, or die well.

Confider adly, that in order to pray well, our heart and mind must go always along with what we are about;

or, which is the best attention of all, and most conducing to bring us to the love of God, our thought must then be fix'd in God; not confidered as abroad, but as within our own fouls; not as represented by corporeal images, but as the being of all beings, the eternal, incomprehensible, infinite truth. But that we may be better able to keep this attention in the time of prayer. we must hearken to the admonition of the wiseman. Before prayer, prepare thy foul, and be not like a man that tempteth God. This preparing the foul for prayer confifts, in discharging beforehand, as much as possible, all foreign thoughts; restraining even at other times all the rovings of the imagination, and vain amusements: untying the heart from its diforderly affections; and beginning by a serious recollection of the soul in the presence of God; and an earnest address to him, to teach us, and help us to pray as we ought.

Consider 3dly, that is, after taking these precautions, we still find ourselves hurried away with a multitude of distractions, in the time of prayer, we must not be discouraged. For as long as our will has no share in these distractions, they will not be imputed to us; nor hinder the fruit of our prayers. Tis the heart, it is the will that God regards: our care must be to keep this right; to set out at first with a good heart, and a will to seek our heavenly father: and not to retract this by any wilful turning aside from him: and we may be assured that he that seeks, and sees the heart, will not be offended, at the involuntary wandrings of the imagination, which can never separate the soul

from him.

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Conclude upon ever keeping a close guard upon thy mind, and upon thy heart, if thou desire to pray well: and this not only at the time of prayer, but at all times. For if thou live in a constant dissipation of thought, at other times; and with a heart set upon irregular affections, and cheating vanities; how canst thou expect, but that both thy mind and heart in the time of prayer will be still running after those things they are accus-

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to med to, and which they have unhappily made their treasure instead of God? In the bear to a delegiors?

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On other conditions of prayer.

NONSIDER first, those words of St. James Iv. 3, You ask, and you receive not, because you aft amifs. Great promises are made in holy writ, in favour of prayer: but these are to be understood, provided we alk for what we ought, and in the manner we ought. But if we are more concerned for the temporal goods of this transitory life, than for the eternal welfare of our fouls; and make fuch things as those the principal fubject of our prayers : we must not think much if God does not hear us. For in thefe cales, we often know not what we alk, or we know not at least what is expedient for us; and it is a mercy of God not to grant us those things, which, if he were to grant them, might be the occasion of the loss of our fouls. In our prayer, we must feek first the kingdem of God, and his juffice; and as to those other things, God will give us them as far as he fees expedient for us. And if at any time we pray for such things; or bray to be delivered from fufferings and croffes we must ever pray with submission, and conformity to the will of God; if it be his will; and if he sees it expedient; and not otherwise: Not my will but thine be

Consider 2dly, that we must not only pray for such things as are truly good; as being agreeable to God's holy will, and conducing to our true and everlasting welfare: but we must also pray in a proper manner; that is, with a pure intention, and with a lively faith, and considence in God. Great promises are made in Scripture to prayer: but it is to prayer made with faith, and considence in God. The honour of his divine

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majefly is engaged to fland by those that pray with a ffrong belief, and trust in him. But as for him that prayeth, wavering in faith, let him not think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord, James i. 6. If then we would pray to the purpole; we must come before God with a lively fense of his boundless power, goodness and mercy; with a conviction of his being ever faithful to his promifes; and that his divine truth cannot fail. And we must not trult in the feast in ourfolvest; nor ground ourfelves upon any merits of our own; but put an entire confidence in God; who more defirous to give us his grace than we are to alk it: and we shall quickly experience how ready he will be to thew us mercy; and to hear our prayers. So true it is, that no one ever trufted in him and was confounded.

Consider 3dly, that, in order to obtain our requests we must take care to present them in the name of Jefus Chrift, and through the merits of his death and passion. What we alk of God, is mercy, grace, and falvation: now our faith affures us, there is no means, of coming at mercy, grace, or falvation, but through Jefus Christ. No one can come to the Father but by him, St. John xiv. 6. Whatfoever we shall ask the Father in his name, shall be given to us. Chap, xw. 23, 24 But there is no other name under heaven given to men subereby we must be saved, Acts iv. 12. Here then is the great grounds of that faith and confidence, with which we draw pear to God, and address our prayers to him; the Son of God has died for us : he has made over to us the merits of his death and pattion : he has purchased for us those graces which we pray for his blood continually pleads in our behalf, Through him then let us go with confidence to the throne of grace: that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in Jeasonable and Hebraiv. 16 ..

Conclude to take the blood of Christ along with you. as often as you defire to go within the veil, by prayer, into the fanctuary of God: This will open to you the may to all mercy, grace, and falvation some billion Thurf-

But alas we have not that faith, that fervour, that

#### Thursday after the second sunday in Lent. render out pra od, than a protound

sob reven bor On ferriour in prayer.

ONSIDER first, the necessity of fervour in prayer: that is to fay, that we should be quite in earnest in our addresses to God. For how can we expect, that God should hear, or regard, our supplications, when we present them with so much indolence and indifference, as if we told the Almighty, we did not care, whether he heard us, or no? Such luke-warm prayer as this, inflead of drawing down his bleffing upon us, will rather move him to indignation. 'Tis doing the work of God negligently: which is a thing of the worst of consequences to a Christian soul. Feryour and earnestness in prayer is recommended to us by the great example of the Son of God, who in the days of his flesh, with a strong cry and tears, offered up his prayers, and supplications: Hebr. v. 7: 'Tis recommended by the doctrine, and example of all the Saints, Not a fervour of the imagination, but of the will: not expressed by the motion of the head, or any outward gestures of the body, but consisting in the strong defires of the foul, fueing with all her power for the mercy and grace of God.

Consider 2dly, how our Lord recommends to us, St. Luke xviii. 1, That we foould always pray, and not to faint; that is, not to be discouraged, nor to give over, if we dont immediately find the effect of our prayers: but, by the example of the poor widow, whose im. portunity prevailed even upon a wicked judge, still continue to knock at the gate of heaven, till God is pleased to open to us, according to his merciful promise. Perfeverance in prayer, and a holy importunity, were the means by which the Saints obtained fuch great things of God. It is well if the want of these be not the true reason why we are not favoured in the like man-The hand of God is certainly not shortened.

humility

But alas! we have not that faith, that fervour, that perseverance, which they had, who like their Lord, passed sometimes even whole nights in prayer.

Confider 3dly, that nothing contributes more to render our prayers effectual with God, than a profound humility A contrite and humbled heart God never despifes. The prayer of him that humblath himfelf; faith the wifeman, Eccluf. xxxv. 21. Shall pierce, the cloud --- and not depart, till the most High behold. Humility always finds admittance with God, who ever refifts the proud, and gives his grace to the bumble. If then, my foul, thou defire that thy prayers should find admittance, see they be ever accompanied with humility, will Speak to my Lord, faid holy Abrahamy Gen. sving 27 whereas I am but duft and after Alas! poor foul of mine, thy whole being is a mere nothing in the fight of that great God, before whom thou presentest thefelf in prayer. His majesty fills heaven and earth; and both heaven and earth dwindle away to just nothing at all in his presence. But what a figure then do thy crimes and abominations make in his eyes & And how wretched an object do they make of thee! See then what pressing motives thou hast to hum ble thyfelf in prayer, in confideration of thy fins and of what thou haft deserved by them. Nothing but humble prayer can remedy all thy evils, and this will effectually do it.

epicelayed syright eyewle nigod correct solven of his Sprinelayed syright eyewle nigod correct solven in his Sprinelami yldmud here the correct of correct of solventials of the potential of the potentials of the potential of the part of heaven, till God is pleated the open to us, according to his merciful promife. Perfeverance in prayer, and a holy importunity, were the feverance in prayer, and a holy importunity, were the means by which the Saiots cottained such great things of the reason why we are not savoured in the like mantine reason why we are not savoured in the like mantine. The hand of God is certainly not shortened,

MEDIT AT PONSTO

### by way of meditation, recommended by St. Ignatius Friday after the second Sunday in to anighter that the Lent plane their rwill. So ye the lights

this forgreign exercity its mental prayer, and particu-

ONSIDER first, that the great advantages, and excellence of prayer, are chiefly found in mental prayer, that is to fay, in fuch kind of prayer as is not confined to any form of words, but is made in the fecret closet of the heart; where the foul all alone, finds her God alone, and entertains herfelf with him. The advantages of this kind of prayer, beyond that which is only vocal, are, that it brings us nearer to God, and to his heavenly light; that it employs all the powers of the foul, viz. the memory, the understanding, and the will, about him; that it opens the eyes of the foul to the knowledge of God, and of ourselves; and is the true school in which we learn to despise the world, and its cheating vanities; and to love God with our whole hearts. O my foul, fee thou daily frequent this school delicitation region the Cade oute though avoid arivibile

Consider 2dly, that the Saints, and other masters of a foiritual life, have prescribed certain rules and methods of mental prayer, with a variety of subjects, to make the bractice easy. According to these rules and methods, the foul begins, by placing herfelf in the prefence of her God, and by humbly imploring his divine affiffance :: Then the memory represents the subject of the prayer; and the understanding is employed in confidering the heavenly truths discovered therein: till the will is properly affected therewith, and stirred up to the fear and love of God; to an humble confidence in his goodness; to a fense of gratitude for his benefits; to a horrous of fin; and a fincere repentance for past offences; and fuch like affections: which ought to be followed by good and firm refolutions of avoiding evil and doing good; and in particular, of the immediate amending fuch failings as one is most subject to. Such is the method of mental prayer, Sattleday

by way of meditation, recommended by St. Ignatius, St. Francis Sales, and other Saints: and both very easy and beneficial to Christian souls; by its serving greatly to enlighten their understanding, and to instame their will. Give thanks, my soul, to thy God, for the lights he has communicated to his Saints, to direct thee, in this sovereign exercise of mental prayer; and particularly practise what they recommend, with regard to the insisting principally in thy prayer upon affections and resolutions; lest otherwise thy meditations fall short of answering the chiefest end of prayer, which is the love

of God, and the amendment of thy life.

Consider adly, that although this method of mental prayer be excellent, and fuch as ought to be followed. where the foul does not find herfelf invited and attracted another way; yet as the spirit breatheth where he will, John iii. 8. and as we must not pretend to set bounds, or give rules to him, who expects to be ever acknowledged as fovereign Lord and King within our fouls. and to establish his reign there by mental prayer; if he should be pleased to advance the foul to the more perfeet prayer of contemplation, (in which the finds her felf drawn nearer to God, quite alone with him, and absorpt in his love) she must not be referained, by any of these usual forms, or methods, from following that happy call; and thankfully yielding herfelf up a captive to divine love. For it must ever be the rule of the foul, which defires to have the kingdom of God eltablished in het interiour, by way of mental prayer to follow God and his divine attractions, yet so as to take a guide along with her, for fear of being imposed upon by taking the fuggestions of Satan, or of her own pride and felf-love, for the motions of the Spirit of God;

can be of half to much importance to thy true welfare:

noting the work way to heaven. The morning is the helf entime for it, and half an hour at least ought to be dedicated to item to be dedicated

vol Do

Saturday

# Saturday after the second Sunday in.

On the practice of mental prayer.

MONSIDER first, the great errour of many Chrisfrians, who imagine the practice of mental praver to be very difficult; and therefore are discouraged from undertaking this exercice, by the vain apprehension of not being able to fucceed in it; an errour which the devil endeavours to propagate with all his power, hees cause he fears nothing more than mental prayers as beat ing the direct ruin of his usurpation, and the established ment of the kingdom of God in the foul. To comfine this errour, and to take away this prejudice, against for necessary an exercice; reflect that there is no fuch invitatery in mental prayer, as people vainly imagine; that it confifts in confiderations and affections, that is, ins thinking and loving? and this in thinking on subjects, generally the most easy, and the most copious that can bego and at the fame time, of the utmost importance to the foul ; and in leving him, whom by thinking we find to be every way the most worthy of our love. We can eafily think of our other affairs, and even of every trifle that comes in our way: nay thinking is fo natural to us, that we cannot help thinking of fomething, whenever we are awake. And shall thinking be themonly difficult when we are to think of matters of the utmost confequence to our everlafting welfare? Or shall loving be difficult to a foul that was made to love, and that never can find reft but in her love; and whom God, by his grace, is continually inviting and preffing to love his promiles; thanking him for his great patience; mid

Consider adly, that the subjects for mental prayer, which are the most necessary, are withat the most early system as those that are recommended by St. Teresa, and her writings, and by her own practice: wize The true knowledge of ourselves, and what we are, both as mortals, and as sinners: how much we owe to this ways of any blood you enology and Gid!

God; and how much we have offended him; and how ungrateful we still are to him : what he is ; and how much he loveth us; and what he hath done for us: the great humiliations and fufferings of the Son of God, for our redemption from fin and Satan: the fudden vanishing of all present things; and the eternal punishments and rewards to come. Such meditations as these are no ways difficult or curious, but easy for east very capacity; and withal open a wide field for the foul to expatiate in : and from these it will be easy for her to pass on to a variety of pious affections, suitable to the subject of the meditation. But more especially such confiderations as these ferve very much for enkindling in the foul the love of God, and a defire of being grateful to him, and of never more offending him : when we reflect what he, the Lord of glory, infinite in majefty, has done and fuffered for us, fuch poor wretches as we are, to deliver us from fuch torments, which we had deferved; and to purchase for us such glory, of his

own pure mercy and goodness. on who does not will non

Confider 3dly, that it is also easy for the foul to praces tife mental prayer, in the way of familiar colloquies, or entertainments with our Lord: converfing, and dilcourfing with him, as we would do, if we had him vifibly present with us; as when he was here amongst men in his mortal life: treating with him as with a parent, a friend, a benefactor, as with our high prieft, our advocate, our physician, our director, our brothen our spouse, our head, our Redeemer, &c. sometimes humbling ourselves before him, confessing, and begging pardon for our many difloyalties: at other times reprefenting to him our many infirmities; minding him of his promifes; thanking him for his great patience to-il wards us; condoling with him in his fufferings, and the daily affronts he receives from obstinate finners promising a new life for the future; offering all that we have, and our whole being to him; petitioning him for our many spiritual wants and necessities, &c. For fance we never want words, faith St. Terefa, totalk with other persons, why should we, to speak with God ?'

God?' And surely none can want matter, to converse and discourse about with him, but such as think they owe nothing to him, and neither here, nor hereafter,

defire or expect any thing from him.

Conclude to let no apprehensions of difficulties difcourage thee from the daily practice of mental prayer. The grace of God will make it easy to thee, if thou continue resolute in using thy best endeavours. Be not frightened if thou meet with nothing at first, but dryness and distractions; let thy will be good, and these will not hurt thee: God, in his good time, will let the light of his countenance shine upon thee. By perseverance in this exercice, thou wilt, at length, dig out a treafure, which will abundantly recompense whatever labour thou hast taken in digging.

## Third Sunday in Lent.

On devotion to the Passion of Christ.

ONSIDER first, that meditating on the sufferprincipal part of the Christian's devotion, during the time of Lent. For the season approaches in which we celebrate the yearly memory of our Lord's passion; and therefore the church, which at no time can forget the fufferings and death of her heavenly spoule, at this time particularly recommends to her children, to fet before their eyes their crucified Saviour, and to make him the great object of their devotion. His passion is the overflowing fource of all mercy, grace, and falvation to us; all our good must be derived from his cross; therefore, the more we approach to him in his sufferings, and station ourselves near the cross, by pious moditations on his passion, the more plentifully shall we partake of that mercy and grace which flow continually from these fountains of life, his precious wounds. The great defign of Lent is, that the finner should now return to God, and fue for pardon and mercy; and what betters means can he have for this, than by taking along with mon

him to the throne of mercy, the blood of Christ, by

daily meditating on his passion?

Confider 2dly, that the paffion of Christ has been always, from the beginning of the world, the great object of the devotion of the children of God: in all their bloody facrifices of old, of oxen and freep, they celebrated beforehand the death of the Lamb of God, flain in figure from the beginning of the world. And as from the time of the fall of Adam, no grace could ever be derived to any man, but through the channel of the merits of the death and passion of our Redeemer whose future coming was revealed to man immediately after his fall: so no facrifices could ever be acceptable to God, but fuch as had relation to him, and through faith in him. Much more now, under the new law. are all the faithful obliged to make the passion of Christ the great object of their devotion s fince he has inflituted the eucharistical facrifice and facrament, and left us therein the facred mysteries of his body and blood: for this very end, that, in our most solemn work fhip, we should have always before our eyes his passion and death. See, my foul, how much thy God defires thou fhouldst remember what he has suffered for thee T And why? Doubtless that by this means thou might W be confirmed in his love. O bleffed be his goodness fortievent inspendence and deliver double

Consider 3dly, how ungrateful all such Christians are, as forget the sufferings and death of their Redeemer: may they not all be reckored in the number of those, of whom he complained of old, by the royal prophet; that they lest him alone in his passion, and took no notice of him. I looked on my right hand, and beheld, and there was no one that would know me, Pf. cxli. Had the meanest man open earth suffered but the tenth part of what our Lord has suffered, for the love of one of us; we should be basely ungrateful, if we ever forgot his sufferings, and his love. What then must we think of ourselves, if we forget the unipeakable sufferings, and infinite love of the Son of God himself, nailed to a cross, to deliver us, by his death, mid

met.

from the eternal torments of hell? Ah I Christians let

us never be fo ungrateful!

Conclude O my foul, at this holy time at least, daily to accompany thy crucified Jesus by meditations on his sufferings. With Christ I am nailed to the cross, said St. Paul Gal, ii. 19. My love is nailed to the cross faid St. Ignatius the Martyr. O that like these generous lovers, we could always adhere to our crucified God.

## Monday third week in Lent.

On the great advantages of devotion to the passion in the passion of Christ within its amore of the

ONSIDER first, that the consideration of the passion of Christ is the sovereign means of all good to Christian fouls. As Moses lifted up the ferpent in the defart, so must the son of man be lifted up; faid our Lord to Nicodemus, John iii, 14, 15, That spholomer believeth in him may not perift, but may have everlasting life. As then the looking at the brazen ferpent, (which was a figure of the death of Christ,) was the means of divine appointment, to heal the Israelites, who were bitten by the fiery serpents, sent amongst them for their fins; and to rescue them from temporal death: fo the contemplation of the passion of Christ, is the great means to heal Christian fouls from the bites of the infernal ferpent, and to deliver them from everlasting death. Every finner that looks for mercy, must return to God with his whole heart, and that by faith, hope, love and repentance, Now, 'tis in meditating on the passion of Christ, we contemplate; the great object of our faith; the chiefelt ground of our hope; the most pressing motive of divine love; and the strongest and most effectual inducement to repentance for our fins. O let us embrace then this great means of bringing us to God, and to all good. It is a striction of the constitution of the etrained last govern an acutation that the rol Contin

Vor. L.

Confider 2dly, that as the belief of Christ crucified is the most fundamental article of the Christian's faith; fo it has the greatest influence of all other articles on our justification: according to that of the Apostle, Rom. iii. 23, 24, 25. that we all have finned: and need the glory of God. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God bath proposed to be A PROPITIATION THROUGH FAITH IN HIS BLOOD, &c. "Tis then through faith in his blood we are to be introduced to the divine mercy: and 'tis by meditating on his passion we are to be introduced to a lively faith in his blood. So that the devotion to the passion of Christ is the shortest way to come at justifying faith. It has no less influence on our hope, by fetting before our eyes, how much God has loved us in giving his only Son; and the great grounds we have to look for all good through him. For as the apostle writes, Rom. viii 32. He that spared not even his own Son: but delivered him up for us all, bath be not alfo with him given us all things? Ownat an earnest indeed that God given us of mercy, grace and falvation, in the blood of his Soit! What may not poor finners hope for, from fuch and lo-great a Redeemer; if they apply to his facred parlion, by daily meditations; and offer up their humble fup plications to his Father, through him, and his infinite remoted death : as the contemplation of the patient

Consider solv, that as nothing contributes to effectually to our justification and functification, as the love of God fo nothing contributes more effectually to excite this heavenly love in our fouls, than the devotion to the passion of Christ. For here we most clearly discover the incomprehensible goodness of God, and the inexhaustible treasures of his divine love for us. This excites in us a define of returning love for love; life for life. This attracts us, like Magdalene, to the feet of our crucified Saviour, with an earnest define to walk them with penitential tears, slowing from, and enlivened by divine love. This makes us grieve for our past ingratitude, in having had hitherto Vol. I.

for little sonse of his goodness and love; this makes us lament the share our sins have had in nailing him to the cross; this teaches us to offer our whole hearts to him, in order to make him the best amends we are capable of; by loving him hencesorward, both in time, and eternity. Thus the devotion to the passion of Christ introduces that penitential love, to which our Lord attributes the remission of sins, when he says of Magdalene, Luke vii. 47. Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much.

Conclude to flation thyself at the foot of the cross, and by the daily contemplation of the sufferings of thy Redeemer, so to exercise thy soul in faith, hope, love, and repentance; as to secure to thyself mercy, grace,

and falvation.

## Tuesday third week in Lent. On the lessons Christ teaches us in his passion.

ONSIDER first, that the devotion to the passion of our Lord, brings with it other great advantages to the foul; inafmuch as it teaches us many excellent lessons for the regulating our lives, according to his bleffed example. The Son of God came down from heaven, not only to fined his blood for us, to pay our ransom: but also to give himself to us as a perfect pattern of all virtues, for us to follow in the practice of our lives: that fo the image of God in man, which had been disfigured by fin, might be repaired and reformed according to this great original. Now although the whole life of Christ, was full of admirable examples of all Christian virtues; yet they no where fine forth more brightly than in his passion: in which he has drawn, as it were, under one view, all the great leffons of virtue, he had taught in his life, both by his words, and his works. So that the paffion of Christ. is the great school, that the Christian must frequent by devout meditations, if he defires to learn the virtues of his Redeemer. He must look on by contemplation, and execute in work, what he fees in this great pattern, which his Lord here flews him, on Mount Calvary, if he defires to make his foul a living tabernacle for the living God. As it was faid to Mofes. ruben be was to make the tabernacle of the covenant; See that they make all things according to the pattern. which was shown thee on the mount. Hebr. viii. 51 11

Confider 2dly, what the lessons are, that Christ more particularly defires to teach us in his paffion. The Apostle informs us, Philip. ii. 5, 8, that they are principally his obedience, and his humility. He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross; and this, that we might learn to be of the like mind. O let us study well these great leffons. Adam fell from God by disobedience to gratify himself, he transgressed the holy law of God; and fo entailed both fin and death upon all his offspring. By the obedience of the second Adam Jesus Christ, we are delivered from fin and death; but upon articles of learning and practifing his obedience; and that also unto death; by a constant and perpetual will of sticking close to the commandments of God at all events; and of rather dying than transgressing his holy law. This is the obedience, that Christ expects we should learn from his Cross; viz. so as to be ever willing to part even with our dearest affections, rather than offend our God: and to hibmit to any fufferings whatfoever, rather than to disobey. This is true Christian obedience : and nothing left will bring us to God. My foul, thou must learn this defion at the foot of the crofs. and bar

Consider adly, what a lesson of humility Christ has given us in the whole course of his passion: becoming therein, as a warm, and no man; the reproach of men. and the outcast of the people. Pf. xxi. 7. See how he humbled himself, under the malediction of our fins in his prayer in the garden. How he humbled himfelf, in fuffering with filence all manner of calumnies. affronts and difgraces. How he humbled himfelf un-Ye sais area los estado O 2 sao astatom tovos den

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der those ignominious and infamous torments, of scourging at the pillar, crowning with thorns, and his carriage of the cross. In fine, how he humbled himself, in his being crucified between two thieves, and in dying that most disgraceful death of the cross. But who is this, my foul, that thus humbles himself, and makes himself thus mean and contemptible for thee? Why 'tis the Lord of glory: 'tis the most High: 'tis the great king of heaven and earth. And why does he thus debase himself?' Tis to teach thee his humility; a lesson so necessary, that without learning it thou canst never please God, nor have any part with him.

Conclude to study well these necessary lessons, by a daily attendance, upon our Lord in his passion. He came down from heaven to be our teacher: and his cross is the pulpit, from which he most feelingly and

effectually preaches to our fouls.

## Wednesday after the third sunday in Lent.

On other lessons, to be learnt from Christ in his passion.

CONSIDER first, that in the passion of Christ, his meekness is no less admirable than his humility. These two he jointly recommended in life, to be learnt of him, St. Matt. xi. 29. And these two he jointly taught in death, by his great example. He was led as a sheep to the saughter, and as a lamb before his shearer he opened not his mouth. Isai. liii. 7. The Lord God hath opened my ear, saith he Isai. 1. 5, 6. And I do not resist. ——— I have given my body to the strikers, and my cheeks to them that plucked them: I have not turned away my face from them that rebuked me, and spit upon me. And why all this? But to leave us an example, that we should follow his steps, I Pet. ii. 21, 23. Who when he was reviled did not revile: when

the suffered he threatened not: but delivered himself to the that sudged him unjustly. O let us learn from the consideration of the behaviour of our Lord in his sufferings, to suppress all the risings of our passion and pride, and to imitate his meekness and silences who in the midst of assroits and injuries of all kinds, became as a man that heareth not, and as a dumb man not opening his mouth.

Confider 2dly, that the devotion to the paffion of Christ, is the great means to learn a Christian patience, under all the croffes and fufferings we are exposed to during our mortal pilgrimage. We cannot live without croffes and fufferings; and in our patience, under them, we are to poffes our fouls. Luke xxi 19. Patience both Avectons and fanctifies all our fufferings: patience is neceffary for us: that doing the will of God, we may receive the promise. Heb. x. 36. Patience bath a perfect work, that we may be perfect and entire, failing in no. As none hath ever gone to heaven thing. James i. 4. but by the way of the cross; so none can ever come thither without patience. Now this all-necessary virtue of patience is best learnt in the school of the passion of Christ; by the consideration of the multitude and variety of his fufferings; and the manner with which he endures all, for the love of us. How thall a finner · (who has deferved hell for his crimes) pretend to complain, or think much of any fufferings, in life, of when by ferious meditations he fets before his eyes, the far greater sufferings of the innocent lamb of God, endured with an unwearied patience, for his fins!

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en he Consider 3dly, what further lessons are to be learnt from the contemplation of the passion of Christ, 1. of charity for our enemies; by considering the Son of God, praying for them that crucified him, and dying for his enemies. 2. Of perfect resignation, and conformity in all things to the holy will of God; by the great example of the prayer of our Lord in his agony, not my will but thine be done, and the consideration of the great sacrifice, that he made of himself to his Father

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upon the crois, without the least referves 332 Of the spirit of voluntary mortification, and self-denial; by seling how the Son of God allows himself no ease, or comfort in his sufferings; but both in life and death makes choice of what is most disagreable to natural inclination. O my soul, these are necessary lessons undeed. See thou study them well, at the foot of the crois; fitting under the shadow of thy beloved. O dear Jesus, do thou by thy internal grace teach me effectually these virtues; by that mercy and love, that nailed thee to the Crois.

Conclude, by loving and bleffing thy God, for having fent thee so excellent a master from heaven, to teach thee the way thither, by his sufferings and death. Let these be always before thy eyes: and thou shalt never

mils thy way.

# Thursday after the third Sunday in

or on the love that Christ has shewn us, in his possion.

ONSIDER first, those words of our Saviour. St. John xv. 13. Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends. And indeed history scarce furnishes us any inflances of a friendship so perfect, as that one friend should be willing to lay down his life for another. But O divine Saviour of our fouls how imperfect is all human friendship compared with thine! what love betwixt man and man could ever bear the least resemblance with that divine charity, which burnt in thy facred breaft, and which abliged thee to offer up thyfelf in facrifice, in the midft of all kind of ignominies, and the very worst of tor-ments, for thy very enemies; for those very wretches that crucified thee; for us milerable finners, who were like to make no better return, for all thy love, and for all thy fufferings, than fin and ingratitude; and this to that

thank there for them; but rather by repeated treatons, to be daily treading under foot thy precious blood. O bleffed by all creatures, for evermore, be this infinite goodness, and love of our dearest Redeemer! O my

dear Saviour, I befeech thee by all this love, and by all this precious blood, which thou halt so lovingly shed for me; that thou wouldst never more suffer me to be

thus ungrateful to thee.

Confider 2dly, what the world would think of a prince, the only fon and heir of fome great monarch, who should entertain such love and friendship for one of the meanest of his slaves, as to offer himself to die a cruel and ignominious death, to rescue this slave from the just punishment of his crimes. Would not all mankind fland amazed at fuch an extraordinary love? And this much more, if the crime, for which this flave was condemned to die, were no lesser, than a treafonable conspiracy against this prince, by whom he was fo tenderly beloved. Ah! Christian souls, this is but a faint refemblance; a very imperfect image, of that inconceivable and inexpressible love, which our Saviour has shewn to us, in laying down his life upon a cross. to rescue us his ungrateful creatures, rebels and traitors to him and his Father, from the eternal torments of hell. which we have a thousand times deserved by our treafons against him. For as there is an infinite diffance between the fovereign majesty of God, and thy of his creatures, how dignified foever; fo there is berween that love, which our God has shewn in dyling for us worms of the earth, and flaves of hell, and that love which would oblige one mortal to die for another. 'O dear Jesus, never suffer me to forget this love, which thou hast thewn me! O give me grace to return thee Allowe for love direct ni dely

Consider 3dly, how truly fiveet, our Lord has shewed himself to us, in his passion, and how rich in mercy.
For supposing it was his pleasure to deliver us from sin
and hell: he could have brought this about, with the
same ease, with which he created all things out of no-

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thing; tone only words one act of his would have been furthered; or it he must needs fuffer, and shed his blood for our redemption, one drop alone of his facred blood, by reason of the infinite dignity of his divine person, would have been abundantly enough to attone for all the fins of ten thousand worlds. But his infinite love for us, and the defire he had to gain our hearts, and to oblige us to love him, would not be content with this, nor with any thing less, than with pouring out the last drop of his most facred blood, by suffering for us the worst of terments, and the worst of deaths. O infinite goodness, how little art thou considered by us here? O how astonishing shalt thou appear to the Saints and Angels for all eternity have the saints and the saints are saints.

Conclude with admiration at the ingratitude and infensibility of Christians, who make profession of believing this infinite goodness, mercy and love; and yet
are so little touched with it; or restrained by the consideration of it, from going on, daily crucifying their Lord
with their sins. O divine love, let me never be so unehappy! O let me never forget thee! O come and take
full possession, at least, of my soul: and let nothing

in life or death ever teparate me from thee, and to mo

# Friday after the Third Sunday in

Other considerations to excite in the foul the love of our suffering Jesus.

that Christ bears us in his passion. It is stronger than death: he loves us more than his own life; since he parts with his life for the love of us. It is more tender than the love of the tenderest mother; since, he voluntarily embraces the pangs of death to give us life: he sheds his blood to cleanse our souls from fin: he offers his own body in sacrifice, to be our victim, our ransom, and our food. At the very time he is suffering, and dying

dying for us he has every one of us in his heart; he embraces each one with an incomparable affection; weeps over each one; prays for each one; and pours out his blood for each one; no less than if he had suffered for that one alone. O my foul, had we then a place in the heart of our Jesus, when he was hanging upon the cross? and shall we ever refuse him a place in our heart? No dear Saviour, my heart is thine: it desires nothing better than to be forever a servant of thy love.

Consider 2dly, how effectual is the love that Christ thews us in his paffion; it contents not itself with words, or professions of affection, nor with such passing fentiments of tenderness, as we imagine we have for him, in certain fits of devotion, at times when nothing occurs for us to fuffer for his fake: but it shews itself by its effects; by his taking upon himself all our evils, to procure effectually all good for us. His love has made him divest himself of all his beauty and comelines; and hide all his glory and majesty; that he might become for us, despised, and the most abject of men, a man of forrows, and acquainted with infirmity: Ifai lini. He bath born our infirmities, and carried our forrows, out of pure love: He has made himself for the love of us as it were a leper, and as one struck by God, and afflicted: He was wounded for our iniquities, and bruifed for our fins. All we like sheep were gone astray-and the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was offered, because it was his own will. And it was his own will; because he loved us; and desired to transfer upon himself the punishment due to us; that he might deliver us from the wrath to come; and open to us the fountains of mercy, grace and life. This was an effectual love indeed. Does our love for him thew itself by the like effects? Are we willing to renounce our own wills, to mortify our inclinations and passions; to fuffer, and to bear our croffes for him? A generous lover, is as willing to be with him on mount Calvary, as on mount Thaber: is this our disposition?

Consider 3dly, how disinterested is the love that Christ shews us in his passion. He loves us without

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any merit on our fide: we deferved nothing from him but hell. He loves us without any profpect of gain to himfelf from us, or any return that we can make to him: we can give him nothing but what he must first give us: we can offer him no good thing but what his love has purchased for us : we can have nothing but what is his. He ffands in no need at all of us, or our goods. O how truly generous is this love of our Redeemer in his passion. How bountiful is he to us! He makes over to us the infinite treasures of his merits; he wants them not for himself; but bequeaths them all to us. His love for us knows no bounds. It hath poffeffed his heart from the first instant of his conception; it burned there for every moment of his life; it carried him through all his fufferings, even to death. It is without beginning, or end; it endures from eternity to eternity. O bright fire, mayft thou take poficifion of my foul, for time and eternity!

Conclude fince thou canst make no better return to offer at least daily thy heart with all its affection to thy loving Saviour. But that it may be worthy of his acceptance; beg that he would cleanse it by his precious

blood, and inflame it with his love.

# Saturday after the third Sunday in Lent.

On the sufferings of our Saviour before his passion.

CONSIDER first, how true that is, of the devoted author of the following of Christ. The whole life of Christ was a cross and a martyrdom. He came into this world to be a victim for our sins; and from the first instant of his conception in his mother's womb, he offered himself to all the sufferings he was to undergo in life and death. Hear how he then addresses himself to his Father. Ps. xxxix. 7. 8. Sacrifice and oblation thou didst not desire: but thou hast pierced ears

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for me. Burnt-offering and fin offering thou didft not require: then faid I, behold I come. In the head of the book it is written of me, that I should do thy will: O my God. I have defired it, and thy law in the midft of my heart. And what was this will, and this law, which from his first conception he embraced in the midst of his heart? But that instead of all other facrifices, he should become himself both our priest and victim, and through his fufferings, thould mediate our peace, and reconcile us to his Father. Thus he accepted beforehand all that he was afterwards to endure: and by the clear and distinct forelight, which he had all along, of his whole passion, suffered in some measure all his life time, what afterwards he endured at his death. Q how early did my Jesus embrace his cross for the love of me! O how early did I prefer my pleasures before his love.

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Confider 2dly, diverse other sufferings, which our Lord went through in the course of his mortal life. His nine months confinement in his mother's wombs most sensible to him, who from his first conception had the perfect use of reason; and who by a violence, which he offered to his zeal and love, was kept fo long from action. The hardfhips he endured at his birth, from the rigour of the feafon; and the poverty of his accommodations: his circumcifion; his flight into Egypt; the fense that he had of the murder of the Innocents: the aufterity of his life; his frequent hunger, thirst and want of necessaries, his labours and fatigues. But all this was nothing to what his boundless charity, and his zeal for the honour of his Father and the falvation of fouls, made him continually fuffer, from the fight and knowledge of the fins of men. had all the fins of the world always before his eyes, for the whole time of his life, with all their enormity, and opposition to the infinite majesty and fanctity of God, and his divine honour and glory; and the dreadful havock they did, and would make in the fouls of men, with all the difmal consequences of them both in time and eternity: and this fight which was always present to him him, was infinitely more grievous to his foul, than the very pangs of death. For if St. Paul had fuch a fense of the evil of sin, as to be quite on fire when he saw any one fall into sin, 2 Gor. xi. 29. how much more

did this fire devour our Saviour.

Confider 3dly, how much our Lord fuffered from being obliged to live and converse amongst men, whose manners were so widely different from, and so infinitely opposite to his: how sensibly he was touched with the crying diforders of the people of the Jews, amongst whom he lived; with their malice, their violences, their injuffices, their deceits, their blasphemies, and the licentiousness of their lives : the pride, ambition, covetousness, and hypocrify of their priests, scribes, and Pharifees; the oppressions of the poor, their contempt of virtue and of truth, and their general forgetfulness of God and their falvation. Add to this, how fenfibly he must have been afflicted with the hardness of their hearts, with which they refisted his graces; their obstinacy in their evil ways; their ingratitude; the opposition they made to his heavenly Gospel; their blasphemous judgments of his person and miracles; their flanders and murmurings against him; and their continually laying fnares for him, and perfecuting him. even unto death. O who can sufficiently apprehend how much our Saviour's foul was affected with all thefe evils; with this reception and treatment he met with from his chosen people; and with those dreadful judgments they were thereby drawing down upon their own heads, instead of that mercy, which he came to purchase for them by his blood! Death itself was not so fenfible to him.

Conclude, if thou wouldst be a true disciple of Jesus Christ, to conform thyself to a life of crosses and sufferings: thus shalt thou wear his livery; and shalt be entitled to a share in his heavenly kingdom. If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him. Yet so, if we

fuffer with his fpirit.

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On our Saviour's prayer in the garden.

ONSIDER first, that our Saviour's passion began the night before his death: when, after having eaten the paschal lamb with his disciples, humbly washed their feet, instituted the great passover of the new covenant, and given them, in an admirable facrament of love, his own most precious body and blood; he went out with them to mount Olivet: the place to which he was accustomed to refort, after the preaching and labours of the day, to spend the evening, if not the whole night, in prayer. Hither he went, on this his last night, to prepare himself for his passion, by prayer; not for any need he had of it for himself; but to give us an example, and for our instruction. O learn my foul, by this great example, how thou art to arm thyself against all trials and temptations! Learn from whence all thy strength is to come, in the time of battle. Give ear to what our Lord faid to his disciples upon this occasion, Matt. xxvi. 41, Watch ye, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. O take heed, lest if thou fleep, as Peter did, when thou shouldst pray, thou deny thy Lord, when thou comest to the trial!

Consider 2dly, how our Saviour begins to disclose to his disciples, the mortal anguish, sear, and sadness, which he then suffered in his soul: My soul, saith he. is for rowful, even unto death: that is to say, with a sadness, which is capable of even now taking away my life, if I did not, by miracle, support myself, for enduring the other torments of my passion. Sweet Jesus, what can be the meaning of this! Didst thou not, from the first instant of life, accept of, and embrace, in the midst of thy hearty all that thou art now going to suffer; for something and the redemption of man? Hadst thou not even a longing defire of accomplishing this great facrifice of our redemption?

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tion? And how comes it that thou art now thus oper pressed with sadness and anguish? Where is that courage and fortitude, which thou hast imparted to thy mark tyrs; which has made even tender maids despise the worst of torments, when they endured them for the lave of thee? And shalt thou, who art the strength of the martyrs; shrink at the sear of death? But O! I very well understand, that 'tis by thy own choice thou hast condescended to all this sadness, sear, and anguish; 'tis to the end that thou mights suffer the more for me, and engage me to love thee the more; 'tis that thou mights teach me how to behave under all my interiour anguishes and afflictions, and how to endure them, for the love of thee.

Consider 3dly, the prayer our Saviour made on this occasion, that, if it were agreeable to the will of his Father, the bitter cup might pass away from him. But O with what fervour did he pray? With a strong cry and tears, Heb. v. 7. With what reverence and humility? Lying prostrate upon the ground, Matt. xxvi. 39. With what earnestness and perseverance? Continuing a long time in prayer; and repeating again and again the same Supplication. Learn, my foul, to imitate him: under all thy diffresses, betake thyself to prayer: but see thou pray, as thy Lord did, with fervour, humility, and perfeverance: see thou pray with the like resignation: Not my will but thine be done. Remember that in thy prayers thou art not to feek thy own pleasure or comfort, but the holy will of God: O make this holy will thy comfort and pleafure, and thy prayer will be always accepted. Stay you here and watch withme, faid our Lord to his disciples: but at every time that he came to them, he found them still asleep; and no help or com-forthad he from their company, in this his desolate condition. O my foul, do thou at least, pity thy Saviour under all this anguish and desolation : Do thou stay and watch with him, by a frequent meditation on his fufferings 10 10 1

Conclude never to forget what thy Saviour suffered for thee in his soul, during his prayer in the garden. No

**fufferings** 

fufferings can be greater than fuch as immediately affect the foul. St. Terefa did not let a night pals, from hervery childhood, without reflecting, before the fell 2fleen on our Saviour's fufferings in that part of his passion and, by this means, the gradually arrived at the perfection of mental prayer, and of all holiness. Do thou the like, of thee? And shale thou, who are the strength of the

Monday fourth week in Lent. On our Saviour's agony and bloody sweat.

ONSIDER first, what pangs, what anguish, what floods of forrow, overwhelmed the foul of our dear Redeemer, during his prayer in this his last night. Alas! no tongue can sufficiently express, nor heart conceive them! However, that thou mayft make some fort of judgment of them, from their effects, consider how they cast him into a mortal agony; how they forced from all his body a wonderful fweat of blood; which not only embrued all his garments, but also trickled down from his body upon the ground, on which he lay profrate in prayer. O how inconceivable a torture muft he have endured in his interiour; when the pange of his foul had fuch a ffrong operation exteriourly, and produced such strange effects in the body! But why all this agony, dear Lord? Why these pangs? Why this prodigious sweat of blood? Was not the death of the cross sufficient for our redemption? Why then these anticipated forrows? Thy love alone can account for them. O bleffed be thy infinite charity!

Consider 2dly, how bitter were the ingredients of this chalice, which our Saviour so much dreaded to drink. Ah! my foul, they were bitter indeed: he had at this time before his eyes a most lively apprehension, a most clear and express representation of all and every particular injury and indignity, ftripe and torment, that he was afterwards successively to endure, in the whole course of his passion, now all at once assaulting his foul. and making him feel beforehand all the forrows, which afterwards only came one by one. But what was far rom one ude never to the P 2 de daring no prayer in the garden. No

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more terrible to our Saviour, was the clear fight, and lively fense he had then of all the fins and abominations of the whole world, from the first to the last, with all their filthiness and horrour, all now laid upon him, as if they were his own; and himself like the emissary goat, Levit. xvi. 21. charged with all the maledictions due to them, and with the wrath of his Father, justly enkindled by them. Sweet Jesus, any one of these monsters is more odious to thee than hell. And how then must thou be affected, when thou not only hast before thy eyes, this infinite number of millions of millions, of these odious monsters, mortal enemies of thy Father, mustered up all against thee; but also feelest their enormous weight, laid upon thy shoulders? O what a share had my fins in this tragical fcene! how did they oppress the foul of my Redeemer! how did they force from him this shower of blood; as if all the pores of his body were turnedinto eyes, to weep for my fins! O let thy agony and bloody sweat, teach me effectually how heinous my fins are in thy eyes; and in what manner I ought to bewail them !

Confider 3dly, another bitter ingredient of that cup of thy Redeemer, which was the forelight he their had of the little sense the greatest part even of Christians would have of all his sufferings; of their ingratitude for his infinite charity; of their abuse of all those graces he was going to purchase for them, with the last drop of his blood; of their perverfenels in taking occasion from his very passion to fin more freely, and to draw down the more dreadful judgments upon their own heads: and, in fine, of the eternal loss of innumerable fouls, who, notwithstanding all his sufferings, through their obstinacy in fin, and final impenitence, would incur the fecond and everlasting death. Consider that every one of these poor souls was more dear to Christ than his own life, fince he parted with his life to fave them. What a cruel anguish then must it have been to his tender and charitable heart, to fee fo many of them blindly and wilfully running into the bottomless pit of endless and irremediable evils, and plunging themselves forever into the the flather of helid. No wonder, after this, that formsny lamentable objects, presenting themselves at once, before the eyes of his soul, and joined with all those menttioned in the foregoing consideration, should cast him
into a mortal agony and bloody sweat saw yell has

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Conclude to admire and adore the wondrous ways of God, in bringing about the redemption of many Emberge, with all the affections of thy heart, the infinite charity of thy Redeemer, which thines forth to bright in this mystery. And see thou be no longer one of that unhappy number, who repay all his mercy and love with sin and ingratitude.

# Tuesday fourth week in Lent.

and with bil On the treason of Judas. 1901 off shang

mustered up all against thee, but allo seeds their elion-

10 25100 Si ONSIDER first, how sensible an affliction it was to our Lord to be betrayed and fold by one of his own apostles, into the hands of those that fought his life. Infomuch that he, who bore in filence all the infolencies of the Jewish rabble, and the pagan foldiers; he who fuffered the whips, thorns, and nails, without complaint; could not but complain of this treachery. ingratitude, and perfidiousness of a false friend; both in his words to his disciples, the night before his passion, and to the traitor himself, when he offered him the treacherous kife; and long before by the royal prophet Hear how he expresses himself in the plalms. Even the man of my peace (the friend whom I had taken into my bosom) in whom I trusted, who ate my bread (even the bread of life) bath greatly supplanted me, Pf. xl. 10, and again, If my enemy had reviled me, I would verily have born suith itis and if he that hated me had floken great abines paginfimes I would perhaps have hid malest from hims But show a man of one mend, my suide and my far buildes who die to take sweet meats together with me Keven the facred body and blood of thy Redsemer) in the bayle of God we walked with confert; 21 live 13114. Nes, I had affociated thee to the communion of all my the goods

goods and glaces in my church and shad admitted thee to be one of my individual companions, a witness of all my doctrine and miracles, and even one of my twelve apostles. And that thou, fo highly favoured, without any merit of thine, should be thus ungrateful others falle and perfidious, as without any injury or provocahims for a petty trifling interest, to betray me into the hands of my chemies, and to join thyfelf with them to perfecute me unto death! O this it is that afflicts my foul and the more insupportably, because, in betraying and felling me, thou betravest and fellest thy own foul, (which is fo dear to me) to be an eternal prey to devils ? O take care, my foul, thou never limitate the traitor! O dear Jesus, be thou my keeper, or elfe I shall also betray both myself and thee ! Alas! how often have I betrayed thee already, by wilful fin ? O never fuffer one to be fo miferable any more! vd anomanilani live

noi Confider 2dly, what an aggravation it was to the inojury which the traitor offered to our Redeemer, that he should fet no greater value on him; but fell him aclo -Jown rate as thirty pieces of filver, the price, 'tis likeby, of the meanest flave; and that he should prefer such a triffing confideration before his Lord and his God, who made both him and all things; and who fet fuch a walue upon his foul, as to employ his whole life and death, and give his own most precious blood to redeem siten My foul, dost thou not loudly condemn and detest this monthrous treason? But half thou never been guilty wof the like on worfe & Hat thou never fold, for a more otriffing confideration, the grace and friendfhip of thy Redeemer? Haft thou never preferred, before him, a petty interest, a filthy pleasure, a punctillo of honour,

or the gratifying some unreasonable passion? And what invastable this but felling both thy God; and the own respects for something of less value than the traitors thirelegipieces lof filveral Alas beitis what thou haft been guilbe dy of as often as thou haft committed mortal din Be orconfounded repent, and amenda eldasores flom

word Confider 3dly, and fee, in this example of Judas, what no flate of life, or calling, how sholy foever, can God fecureiee

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fedure stir frombidanger suffice nan apolle, tealleloby Christ and trained up in his school; so well instructed by his heavenly doctrine, and great examples; fand empowered by him to cast out devils, and work wonderful miracles, is fallen nevertheles, and fallen fo as to rife no more, even into the bottomless pit, bo filet him that hands be fenfible upon what flippery ground the stands, and by whose grace he is supported, and kept from falling: that fo, by distruting entirely in himself, and placing his whole confidence in God, he may work out his falvation with fear and trembling. But what was it that brought Judas to this enormous streafond It was the love of money. This was his predominant passion. This he indulged sat first in leffer sinjuffices, by the opportunity of carrying the common purfe and thus, whilft he took no care to mortify his evil inclinations, by degrees, they gained ground upon him, till they introduced Satan into the full poffession nofhis foul and fo prevailed upon him to betray and to fell his mafter, and then to hang himself in despair. Christians, beware of your passions; stiffe them betimes pleft they grow headstrong, by being heglected in the beginning. Especially take care of that cheating vice of the love of money, the fource of minumerable evils; and yet the poison works to infensibly, that few cop none are willing to think themselves infected with fited Alas I how many pretexts and pretences are made wife of to cloak the evil r how many ways of palliating even frauds, injuffices, usuries, and what not And how vingenious are men, where their interest is concerned, to a persuade themselves that their way is right, the latter and of which as they will find to their coft, when itis or the gratifying londtable brioss of the death of late odat nwo Conclude to mistrust theself, and the own judgment. - in allocates where they worldly honour, interestion - ipleafine, his concerned; because 'tis matural; on these eloccations, to be biaffed to that fide of the question that is most agreeable to felf-love. O how hard it is to the an impartial judge in one's own case! but O how nahappy thereare they that in displicity of heart, feek fecure Goo

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God and his holy will and law, on all octalions or and do not define to bend down the law of God to their will, but their will to the law of God law and out well of

Wednesday fourth week in Lent.

Malchus . Dord the apprehension of our Lord. sudleM

ONSIDER first, how our Saviour rising up from the ground, where he had lain proftrate in prayer, all embrewed in his own blood, which he fhed during his anguish and agony, goes for the third time to his disciples, whom he had desired to pray, and to watch with him; but alas he finds them still affeep. So little comfort did they afford their Lord in his diffres! O my foul, has not this been often thy case, to be unconcernedly sleeping, when it behoved thee to be watching and praying with thy Saviour And what has been the consequence of this? Why thouhast run away, and hast abandoned him, in the time of trial and temptation. But now, by this time, the traitor, who was not affeep, has conducted to the place a multitude, headed by fome of the priests and Pharifees, and armed with fwords and clubs, to apprehend our Lord. See, my foul, how thy Saviour goes forth to meet them; how ready he is to fuffer; how willing to deliver himfelf up for the love of thee: See in what manner he receives the traitor's kissis my friend fays he to what send sort thou come hither & Reflect what, thou are about, land repent whilst thou hast time , and I will thew thee mercy : Judas wilt thou betray the Sont of Man with a kifs? O the meekness and charity of our Redeemer; who is ready to receive with open arms even Judas himfelf, if his hardened heart had morn been proofing ain & all the charmes of his mardy al Sinners fee what am endouragement we have to run to him for mercy, fince herwas defirous to flow it even his enemies) and finve to enter inflammidirations and of Confider 2dly, how our Lord was pleased, on this occasion, to manifest his power; by casting down to

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the ground all that armed multitude, that were come) to apprehend him, with these only words, I am he to shew the world that no power of man could app prehend him, but by his own will and confent; in confequence of his own free love : O bleffed be that free love for evermore! On the same occasion, when Malchus a servant of the high-priest, more busy than the rest in apprehending our Saviour, had his ear cut off by the fword of Peter; our Lord not only restrained this apostle from using any further violence in his defence; but instantly shewed, both his power, and his goodness, in healing the wretch, and restoring his ear upon the fpot, by his only word to teach us by his example to overcome evil with good. Then after having meekly exposulated with the priests and the Pharifees, for their coming out in this manner in the night, with an armed mob, to take him, as if he had been fome highway robber, he gave them leave to use their pleasure with him; but this, upon condition, that they should not meddle with any of his difciples. So folicitous was our dear Redeemer that none of his little ones should suffer any thing, upon his occasion, whilst he was going to offer up himself in facrifice for the love of them.

Consider 3dly, that our Lord had no sooner delivered himfelf up, with these words, This is your hour, and the power of darkness, but they immediately rush in upon him; and, as we may prefume from the rest of their carriage, and from their hatred to him, load him with injuries and blasphemies. Then they bind him falt, as if he were some notorious criminal; and drag him violently along with them in the dark, through thick and thin, into the city. See, my foul, and contemplate the meekness, patiences and filence of the lamb of God, under all these outrages: accompany him in spirit upon this occasion? (for his apostles have all left him, in the hands of his enemies) and strive to enter into his interiour, and to learn from the fecret conversation he has all the while with his Father, from the prayer he is there making making for his enemies; and from the charity with which he offers up both his present and suture sufferings, for thy sins, and for the sins of the whole world, what ought to be thy dispositions under all the sufferings thou meetest with; what thy interiour exercices of devotions; and what thy spirit of charity for them that afflict thee, and persecute thee.

Conclude to follow thy Saviour in spirit, through all the different stages of his passion; with a sincere defire to study and learn the great lessons he teaches thee in his sufferings; and withal to make the best return of love thou art able, for the infinite love he has shewn

thee, in suffering so much for the love of thee.

## Thursday fourth week in Lent.

On our Lord's being brought before Annas and Caiphas.

CONSIDER first how the rabble that had apthe city with loud shouts, and cries, brought him first before Annas, one of the chief priests, to give him the pleasure of seeing their prisoner; and of insulting over him. Go in my foul with him, and fee the Son of God, the judge of the living and the dead, standing with his hands tied behind him, before this infolent Jewish priest. Hear the impertinent questions he puts to him, concerning his disciples and his doctrine mand admire the courage, meekness, and evenness of foul, which thy Saviour shews in his whole comportment on this occasion. See how he suffers even a vile servant, not only to rebuke him in words, for his modest and just answer; but also to strike him on the face before all the company: An affront, which, if offered to the meanest of men, would be thought insupportable, by the children of this world: but our great mafter has taught us, both by word and example, that true courage confifts in bearing, and not in revenging injuries. And furely nothing can be more honourable to a Christian than to salkwitely answered, that he wast rith

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driw yours sary Day in the Years of guilly walk in the footleps of his king, and to keep his laws. Confider 2dly, how our Saviour, bound as the was is hurried away, with the like shouts and infolences, from Annas to the house of Caiphas the high priest, where the fenate, or council, was affembled, determined to deftroy him right or wrong: and therefore, notwithstanding it was now late at night, they immediately proceed to his trial; and to the examining the witnesses, of whom they had provided a good store, to depose against this innocent lamb of God. Christians, what thall we most admire on this occasion; the malice of the enemies of our Saviour, and the gross falshoods they impose upon him; or the force of truth, and the wonderful innocence of our Lord, which would not fuffer their testimonies to be of any weight against him, even in the judgment of so partial, and fo wicked a court. But what is the most admirable of all is that invincible meekness and patience, that perfect peace and tranquillity of foul, with which our Lord fuffered in flence, to hear himself charged by these wicked impostors, with so many false crimes, tending to rob him both of his honour and his life! O furely one must be more than man to be filent on such occations. Learn at least thou, my foul, from this filence of thy Saviour, not to be so excessively nice with regard to thy honour; and if thou must speak in defence of thy own innocences fee thou do it with that calminess and modely that becomes a disciple of fuchoa master? A noify and paffionate defence will only make the cause worse; and will rob thee of thy peace, which is a more valuable good, than any thing the world can't either give, or take away, or and exhibit of vino for

bis evidence did not agree in their flory, stood up, and adjured our Saviour by the living God, to tell them if he was indeed the Christ, the Son of God? Our Lord, he reverence to his Father's name, and to give testimony to that capital truth, the great foundation of the Christian religion, which he came to seal with his blood; immediately answered, that he was; and that hereafter

they

they should see him, sitting on the right hand of God. and coming in the clouds of heaven. Christians, give thanks to your Saviour for this folemn profession of what he was; though standing now in the midst of enemies, determined not to believe him. They rejected and condemned this grand truth to their own condemnation; do you embrace and adore it for your fal-Upon this open declaration of his divinity, the high priest rends his garments and cries out blasphemy: and they all, with one voice, condemn him to death. See, my foul, the Saint of Saints traduced now as a blasphemer; and the author of life judged worthy of death; and this by the whole council of the priests and ancients of his people; and learn thou henceforward not to be so much concerned about the judgment of the world: if it condemns thee wrongfully; what wonder, fince it has condemned Christ himself: He was innocence itself, whereas thy fins deserve other kinds of punishments than the world can condemn thee to.

Conclude, in opposition to this unjust sentence given against the Lamb of God, to join with all the heavenly spirits, and with all the elect of God, in that solemn canticle, Apoc. v. 12. The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power, and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and benediction. But learn withal, from his great example, when thou art called to the trial, never to be ashamed of him, nor his truth; though thou wert even to lay down thy life,

with him, and for him.

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### Friday fourth week in Lent.

On our Saviour's treatment in the bouse of Caiphas.

CONSIDER first, how this sentence of condemnation was no sooner pronounced against our Lord, than the whole multitude of them began to fall upon him, and to treat him with all kind of outrages, and unheard of barbarity. They spit in his

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face and buffet bim, St. Matt. xxvi. 67. They blindfold him, and Smite his face, and ask him faying; Prophely, who is it that Aruck thee? St. Luke xxiii. 64. They bluck his hair and beard, whilft he with his hands tied behind him, makes no refistance, but as he tells us, I ai. I. 5. 6. gives up his body to them that strike him, and his cheeks to them that pluck them, and turns not away his face from them that rebuke him, and fpit upon him. Not to fpeak of many other shameful abuses and injuries? fo that here he is treated indeed as a worm and no man; the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people. Pf. xxi. Here, as the prophet foretold, Lament. iii 30. he is filled with reproaches. See my foul, what the Son of God has willingly submitted to, to save thee from fin and hell. O! embrace that infinite charity of his, which has made him stoop so low, that he might take thee up from the danghill, and place thee with him on his throne: But O! detest thy fins, which have so often

buffered him, and spit in his face.

Consider 2dly, what a kind of a night our Saviour passed in the hands of the rabble, after the council was broke up, and the priefts and ancients had retired to rest. These brutish men, instigated by the example of their masters, and by those wicked spirits that possessed them, would not suffer our Lord to take any reft, during that last night of his mortal life: but continued acting over and over again the same tragedy, by mocking, beating, and abusing the Lord of glory, and discharging their filthy flegm on his facred face; whilst he has no hand at liberty, nor friend, to ward off any of their blows; nor any one so much as to wipe their filthy spittle off from his face, all bruised and quite disfigured with their buffets. Ah! who shall be able to recount one half of what our Saviour fuffered that night from these wretches. Besides all the reproaches, flanders, curses and blasphemies, with which they loaded him, more intolerable than their blows. Many other things faye St. Luke, chap. xxii. 65. they faid against him, blaspheming; whilft he all the while replied not a word: when he was revited, he did not revile: when he fuffered, be threatened not, I Peter ii. 23, but delivered bimself, not only to him that judged him unjustly, but also to these vile wretches, that so shamefully abused him at their pleasure. Be associated O ye heavens, to see your Lord and maker, treated in this outragious manner, by the vilest of men! But alas! my soul they were thy sins that were the chief actors in all this tra-

gedy. O! repent and amend.

Consider 3dly, and set before thy eyes the image of thy Saviour in the hands of these miscreants: take a view of his face all bruifed; his eyes black and blue; his whole countenance disfigured, so that no one of his heavenly features can now be distinguished; his forehead and cheeks defiled with their spittle: his beard plucked; his hair all rent and torn; and his whole person strangely metamorphosed. Then reflect who this is that fuffers all this? and for whom? how freely he fuffers, all by his own choice? and what lesions he gives thee in his fufferings? And thou wilt find abundant matter for thy meditation. But carry the eyes of thy foul still further, and look into his interiour; and fee the peace and tranquillity that reigns there, in the midft of all these sufferings; from his perfect conformity to the will of his Father: fee how he prays for his enemies; fee the joy with which he fuffers, in confideration of the greater glory of his Father, and of our falvation, which he is to purchase by all these his sufferings.

Conclude with admiration and love of the infinite charity of thy Redeemer: and a resolution of imitating his patience, his meekness, his humility, and his confor-

miry in all things to his Fathers will.

tions deploy him not by thy grace? O

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# Saturday fourth week in Lent.

On Peter's Denial.

ONSIDER first, that amongst all the sufferings of that last night of our Saviours life, nothing went fo much to his heart, as the behaviour of his own apostles: one of them betray'd him; all of them abany doned him; and Peter the very chiefest of them all. who had been the most favoured by his master, and who upon all occasions had professed the greatest zeal and love for him, thrice denied that he knew him. O my foul pity thy Saviour thus forfaken by all his friends, Hear his complaints: I looked on my right hand, and beheld, and there was no one that would know me, Flight bath perished from me; and there is no one that hath regard to my foul. Ps. exli. 5. And again: Friend and neighbour thou hast put away far from me, and my acquaintance because of misery. Pf. Ixxxvii. 19. But what was it that could induce Peter, to deny his Lord and master; who a little while before had drawn his fword, to defend him against an armed multitude, and had cut off the ear of the man that offered to lay bands on him: and who had boafted that very night. that though all the rest should forsake him, he would always flick by him; that he was ready to go with him to prison and to death; and that though he were to die for it, he would never deny him? What was it? alas the voice of a poor maid, putting the question to him, if he were not one of his disciples? put him in fuch a terrour, that he not only denied; but even fwore, and curfed himfelf if ever he knew the man! Good Jesus! what is man? what is he not capable of, if thou support him not by thy grace? O' look well to me Lord, and fland by me; or I shall also denie thee.

Consider 2dly, how Peter came to fall so quickly, after such strong resolutions, and so much zeal for his master. Alas! he depended too much upon his reso-

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lutions: he did not fufficiently know himfelf; he thought himfelf stronger than his companions, and built too much upon his own ffrength: and this fecret prefumption was the chief cause of his fall. Ah! my soul, beware of any confidence in thyself: thou art never nearer falling, than when thou feemest to have the strongest refolutions; if thy refolutions are built upon thy own fandy bottom, and not upon the rock, which is Christ. Peter flept, when he was admonished to watch and to pray, left he should fall in the time of temptation: this neglect was another occasion of his fin; by depriving him of that grace, which otherwise would have effectually preserved him. See my foul if thy frequent falls be not owing to thy neglect of watching and praying. Infine, Peter was too rash in exposing himself to the danger, by going into the company of the enemies of our Saviour, and giving ear to their discourses; which so far influenced him as to make him ashamed of his master. Beware lest the like causes should have the like effects in thee. Beware of bad company, and of all fuch conversation, as may make thee ashamed of Christ, or his maxims; or any ways influence thee to the prejudice of thy foul. I have the prejudice of thy foul.

Consider 3dly, in Peter's three denials, how easily one fall draws on another, and generally speaking, a deeper: and learn from hence the necessity of a speedy repentance. Alas! Peter now fallen, as he paffed over unregarded the crowing of the cock, fo might have continued in his fin, and died in his fin too, had not his loving Redeemer, in the midst of all the outrages he was fuffering, cast an eye of pity upon him; and touching his heart at the same time with a strong and efficacious grace, fent him out from the wicked company he was in, to weep bitterly in private for his fins: a practice, which he is faid ever after to have retained, as often as he heard the cock crowing. Bless thy Lord, my foul, for the mercy he shewed to this apostle. Learn to imitate him, by a ready correspondence with divine grace, when it invites thee to go out from Babylon, the fociety of the wicked, and to weep bitterly

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passing acts of repentance, but if thou wouldst be secure, bewail thy sins, like St. Peter, as long as thou livest.

Conclude to be always upon thy guard: and if thou feemest to thyself to stand, take heed less thou fall. Thou hast not half the strength that Peter had; be not then high-minded, but fear. Humility is thy hest fecurity.

# was blow on Passion Sunday.

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On our Lord's being led away to Pilate.

ONSIDER first, how the high priest, and his fellows in iniquity, (notwithstanding their latesitting up at night) very early in the morning convene a more numerous affembly of the fanhedrim, or great council, to carry on and to bring to execution their wicked deligns against the Son of God. Alas! how often are the children of this world more industrious in rifing early to wickedness, than the servants of God to advance his glory, and their own eternal falvation! Here our Lord is again brought before them: and the question is put to him again: Art thou Christ the Son of God? And upon his answering again in the affirmative, they all renew their former fentence, and declare him worthy of death. But see the depth of the malice of these unhappy men against the Lord of life; which will not fuffer them to be content, with putting him to deathprivately; or with stoning him, as they afterwards did St. Stephen; or with any other ordinary death: but they must needs have him die upon a cross; as being the most disgraceful, and at the same time the most cruel of all deaths: and therefore, as they could not of their own authority inflict this kind of death, they determined to deliver him up to Pilate the Governor, in order to his being crucified by him. See what envy and malice is capable of, when once it has taken pollession of the soul. But remember withal that their Q3 CHYY envy and malice could not make the Son of God suffer any thing more, than what his infinite charity had freely made choice of, to suffer for the love of thee. Blessed be that infinite charity for evermore, which has freely chosen so disgraceful and so cruel a death, for our re-

demption from fin and hell!

Confider 2dly, the manner of their conducting our Lord to Pilate, through the streets, lined with an immense multitude of people, assembled at Jerusalem upon occasion of the paschal solemnity. Hear how they publish, all the way as they go, that now they had found him to be a cheat, and a hypocrite; had discovered all his impostures; and convicted him, by his own confession, of blasphemy; and therefore had condemned him to die. See how the people, who a little while before reverenced him as a prophet, are now all changed in his regard, and join with his enemies. O fee what a wretched figure he makes in their hands. after the treatment he had received in the night: See how his enemies take occasion from thence to triumphs and to infult over him: and how his friends grow cold; and are assumed of him. O my foul, do thou at least follow thy Lord, with compassion and love, in these his last ways, that he walks for thy redemption: painful and humble ways indeed, and quite opposite to the ways the world is fond of, and diffaftful to flesh and blood: But O how wholesome, to all such souls as willingly embrace them, and follow them, in the company of Jesus Christ! the spirit (spiritable) and are

Consider 3dly, how the high priest, and the rest of the council, being come to Pilate's house, made a scruple of going in, for fear of contracting a legal uncleanness, that might disqualify them for partaking of the facrifices, that were offered on that day; it being the very day of the feast of the Passover, celebrated in memory of their redemption from the bondage of Egypt. And yet, unhappy men, whilst they scruple going into the house of a Gentile, for fear of an uncleanness, that could only reach the body; they are not afraid of polluting their souls, with the most

most heinous of all crimes, and profaning thereby the greatest of all their folemnities. But what are not men capable of, when they fuffer themselves to be hurried away, by their paffions! But fee the wonderful providence of God! whilst they on their part are so bent upon their wickedness, that no other day will ferve their turn but the very day of their facrificing the pafchal lamb: without thinking, or defigning it, they are concurring, as inftruments, to bring about the merciful defigns of God, for the redemption of the whole world, by the facrifice of the true paschal Lamb, on that same day; of which, their yearly passover was an illustrious figure, mid befored a bulling at thousand in borny

Conclude to beware of thy passions; which, if indulged, are capable of blinding thee to that degree, as to pervert the greatest good into evil. And on the other fide, embrace and love the wonderful ways of divine providence, which fo often draws the greatest good out of the greatest evils. Standard to the transport sends

# Monday in Passion Week.

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#### Our Lord is sent from Pilate to Herod.

ONSIDER first, how Pilate going out, to enquire what accusation they brought against our Saviour, these children of iniquity made no scruple of laying many notorious untruths to his charge; fuch as raifing feditions, stirring up the people to rebellion, forbidding tribute to be paid to the emperour, and treafonably giving himself out for the king of the Jews. Under all these wicked flanders, that tended to nothing less than procuring his condemnation to the worst of deaths, our Lord still shewed the same peace and tranquillity of foul, and still kept filence, to the great aftonishment of the governour. Admirable lessons for Christians! to learn to possess their fouls at least in patience, if they cannot be wholly filent, under calumnies and detractions; and to learn that calmness and meekness will be a better proof and defence of their flom: innocence, innocence, than passion and rage, or returning injury for injury. We see here that Pilate himself, though otherwise a wicked man, was so far from interpreting our Saviours silence, joined with that tranquility of soul, for an acknowledgment of his guilt, that he concluded it to be an argument of his innocence: and clearly perceived in the Jews way of acting, that they were carried on by envy and passion, and not by zeal for justice: and therefore after inquiring of our Lord concerning his being king; and understanding from him, that his kingdom was not of this world; and therefore no way prejudicial to Cesar's authority; he declared himself fully

fatisfied, and fought to discharge him. I've and and and

Confider 2dly, how the Jews still urging to have our Lord condemned, Pilate, to get rid of their importunity, fends him away to Herod, king of Galilee. as one of his subjects, and refers his cause to him. Follow thy Saviour, O my foul, in this new stage; and admire the ferenity of his countenance, and the peace of his foul, whilft he is hurried through the streets, in the midft of an infulting mob, and loaded with reproaches and injuries. See how he is brought in bonds before that prince; attended by the whole council; who there renew all their false accusations against him: whilft Herod, who is overjoy'd to fee him, in hopes of being eyewitness of some miracle, puts a thousand idle questions to him. But our Lord is silent still; and neither takes any notice of the fallities laid to his charge by his accusers; nor seeks to gratify the vain curiosity of Herod; or to do any thing that might incline him to fet him at liberty. No, my foul, thy Saviour has too great a love for thee, to work a miracle to deliver himfelf from that death, which he fo gladly embraces, as the only means to give thee life. Bleffed by all creatures be his goodness forever!

Consider 3dly, how Herod, provoked with our Lord's not consenting to gratify his inclinations of seeing a miracle, revenges himself on him by treating him with mockery and scorn; exposes him to the scoffs of all his soldiers; and orders him to be cloathed in con-

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tempt with a white garment, as with a fool's coat, or: as a mock-king rand, in this garb, fends him back again to Pilate, attended as before, with the priefts and scribes, and an infulting rabble, taking fresh occasion of abusing him, from this difgraceful habit. See here, my foul, with aftonishment, the eternal Wisdom of the Father, treated by the world as a fool; fee the great king of heaven and earth abused as a mock-king, and an idle pretender to royalty. And learn from hence not to be folicitous about the judgment of the world; nor to repine, if they charge thee with folly : for why shouldst thou expect better treatment than thy Lord? O remember that the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God: and that what the world censures as foolishness. is indeed true wisdom. Remember that Whosoever will be a friend of this world, becometh an enemy of God. James iv. 4.

Conclude to adhere to thy Lord, in the midst of all his reproaches and sufferings; to embrace his wisdom, hidden under the sool's coat, which the world hath slung over it; and ever to acknowledge him for the true king of thy heart. O beg that his kingdom may be established there, and the reign of sin be totally abo-

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# Tuesday in Passion-Week.

Barabbas is preferred before our Lord. He is

brought back to his tribunal, and the high priest and council still bent upon destroying the innocent; thinks of another way to bring him off, without giving them offence. It was the privilege of the people to have their choice of a prisoner, to be set at liberty, on that day of the paschal solemnity, in memory of their being delivered on that day from the bondage of Egypt. He proposes therefore to their choice our Saviour on the one hand, and Barabbas, a notorious malesactor, robber,

and murderer, on the other: making fure that they would rather choose to have our Saviour released to them, in whom neither he nor they could find any crime, than Barabbas, the worst of criminals. Oeterhal Son of God, how low doft thou here stoop for my fins, when thou sufferest thyself to be put in competition with the yilest and most wicked of men cland to have it put to the votes of the rabble which of the two is the most deserving of death! O the unparalleled humility of my Saviour! O the unparalleled injury here offered to him by Pilate, whilft he pretends to favour him! But O! the unparalleled blindness of this unhappy people, who make choice of Barabbas before their Meffias; and demand, with loud cries, that the former may be released, and the latter crucified. See, my foul, in this wonderful humiliation of thy Lord. how deep, how desperate was the wound of thy pride, which could not be healed but by fuch and fo great bumility. Learn henceforward, at least, from him, to be humble of heart; and never to think much, if others, how mean foever, be preferred before thee, fince Bail rabbas was preferred before Christ. Alas! how often has thou thyfelf preferred fomething worfe than Barabbas, even that ugly monfter fin, before this Lord of glory.

Consider 2dly, how, the Jews still insisting, in a turnultuous manner, that our Lord should be crucified. Pilate, in hopes of appealing them by a kind of composition, and so making them relent, orders him to be cruelly scourged: a torment most grievous to our dear Redeemer, (who therefore, on divers occasions, speaking of his passion, takes special notice of it) and at the same time most disgraceful, and most ignominious. Look on now my soul, in spirit, and see in what manner thy Saviour is treated for thee. See how the bloody executioners lay violent hands on this lamb of Gods see how they tear off his cloaths, and expose him all naked, before a great multitude, to cold and shame: fee how they bind him fast to a stony pillar: see how they discharge upon his facred back, shoulders, and sides,

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innumerable stripes, lashes, and scourges: see how his body is all rent, torn, and mangled by their barbarity; see how the blood comes spouting out on all sides. See in his gaping wounds the handy-work of thy sins. O take pity of his mangled slesh; and let the sight of so much blood, shed for thee, mollisy thy heart, and determine thee, from this hour, never any more to scourge him by sin. Run in now, and cast thyself at his seet, and bath thyself in his precious blood: mingle, at least, some sew tears with his sacred gore: and repent from thy heart for the share thou hast had in this scourging

of thy Lord.

Consider 3dly, in this fcourging of our Saviour, who this is, that is thus barbarously and ignominiously treated? And why he fuffers all this? O my foul, 'tis the God that made thee: 'tis the Lord and Maker of heaven and earth, who fuffers all this, by his own free choice, for the love of thee: 'tis to deliver thee, by his fufferings, from the grievous and eternal torments thy fins have deferved; and to purchase for thee everlasting joys, which thou never couldst deserve: O infinite love of my God! O never suffer me, dearest Saviour, to forget what thou haft here endured for the love of me ! But see in what manner our Lord suffers all this barbarous usage? Without resistance; without complaint, in filence; with a perfect relignation and conformity to the will of his Father: in perfect charity; praying for his enemies, whilst they stand by insulting over him, and rejoicing at his torments. My foul, let us study well. and learn these lessons of our suffering Redeemer.

Conclude to make the best acknowledgment thou art able of the love thy Saviour has shewed thee in his sufferings; by a return of thanksgiving and love; and by a constant detestation of sin, as his and thy mortal enemy,

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and the occasion of all his sufferings,

### Wednesday in Passion-Week.

Our Lord is crowned with thorns.

ONSIDER first, how the barbarous ruffians, being wearied at last with scourging our Lord, untie him from the pillar, all covered with wounds; and with his strength quite exhausted by the loss of so much blood: and now, whilft they rest themselves, they leave him to feek out, and to pick up his cloaths, which they had scattered about, and to put them on, as well as he can: for he is so stiff and weak, so mangled by their barbarity, as to be but little able to help himself; and he has no friend at hand to help him. But O how ill do these rough woollen cloaths suit with his green wounds! how does the rubbing of them, at every ftep, or motion, encrease the smart? But now, behold my foul, another scene of barbarity, not to be paralleled in all history, acted by these bloody soldiers, in crowning our Lord for a king, by a most cruel mockery; and fporting themselves in his sufferings. To perform this tragical ceremony with more folemnity, they drag our Saviour into the court of the governor's hall, and affemble the whole regiment about him: then they ffrip him again of all his garments, which now were beginning to flick to his wounds; which they rend, and widen by this violence. See, my foul, how thy Lord now stands, as a lamb, in the midst of innumerable wolves: fee how, from head to foot, he is embrewed in blood : fee at how dear a rate he has purchased thy redemp-By cour less howed the and moire

Consider 2dly, what a throne, what royal robes, what a crown, what a scepter, these wretches have provided for the Lord of glory. See, my soul, how they make him sit down on some dirty stool for a throne, and how they throw about him for his royal robes, an old ragged purple garment, to the great annoyance of this wounded back, shoulders, and arms. After this, they press down on his sacred head, a twisted wreath of

long, hard, and sharp thorns, for a royal diadem or crown: then they put into his hand, for a scepter, a reed, or a cane. And having thus arrayed him, they come and kneel before him, in mockery, to pay him their homage; saluting him scornfully, with a Hail, King of the Jews: and then, by turns, they busset him, spit in his face, and strike him over the head, with the scepter they had given him; and by that means drive the thorns deeper in; whilst the blood trickles down a-pace from the numberless wounds which he receives from their points. Ah! who shall be able to number the multitude and variety of sufferings, which our Lord endured upon this occasion! In which it is hard to say whether the torment, or the ignominy and disgrace was the more intolerable. Yet our dear Lord bore all in

patience and filence for the love of us.

Confider 3dly, and take a view at leifure of our Saviour fitting on this stool of ignominy, in the midst of this whole regiment of insolent and barbarous pagan soldiers. Reflect on what he suffers in his sacred head, and temples, from those hard sharp thorns, which pierce his flesh with so many wounds. O! who can conceive the greatness of this torture! See, my foul, how the blood trickles down his face and neck: fee the many bruises he receives from the violent blows they give him with their hands: fee his divine countenance covered with the filth they cast upon him: see through the ragged purple all the wounds of his mangled body, bleeding plentifully for thy fins; in fine, fee how this lawless insulting multitude strive which shall outdo each other in their scoffs, affronts, and injuries; whilft our Lord, on his part, still preserves the same serenity in his countenance, the same tranquillity in his foul, and the fame charity in his heart. But, O my foul, whilft thou art contemplating him under all these barbarous mockeries and torments; cast thy eyes upwards, and fee him fitting on his throne of glory, adored by all the legions of Angels: and do thou join with them in paying him the best homage thou art able: and ever re-

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member, that the more he has debased himself for thee,

the more dear he ought to be to thee.

Conclude by acknowledging thy Saviour, in the midst of all these ignominies, for the true king of thy heart; and begging him to come and establish his throne there. Learn from him to bear, and to submit to, the thorns which are appointed for thee, in this thy mortal pilgrimage. O pretend not to a crown of roses; to a life of worldly pleasures; whilst thy Lord makes choice of a crown of thorns, for the love of thee.

## Thursday in Passion-Week.

Our Lord is shewn to the people, with Ecce Homo
Behold the man.

ONSIDER first, how Pilate, hoping now that the malice of the Jews would be so far abated, as to infift no longer on our Saviour's death, after they should see, in what a barbarous manner he had been treated, in compliance with their passion; leads him out, just as he was, with his crown of thorns upon his head, and his ragged purple on his shoulders: and, from an eminence, shews him to the people with these words; Ecce home, Behold the man. As much as to fay: Take a view of him now from head to foot, fee how he is all covered with wounds, how his whole bo-My is rent, torn, and mangled with feourges, his head and temples pierced with bloody thorns, his face all black and blue, and his perfon quite disfigured. See how cruelly he has been handled, in complaifance to you, though neither I, nor Herod, could find any crime in him. Let then this outrageous treatment he has received from the foldiers, let all this blood he has fhed fatisfy you; take pity on him now at leaft, and cease to feek his death. But O! how vain it is to expect that mens passions should be abated by giving way to them! Pilate imagined the fight of fo much innocent blood already fhed, would extinguish the thirst of the Tews; whereas it did but encrease it, and make them the the more eager after our Lord's death. See, my foul, thou never fuffer thyself to be imposed upon in the like manner, by thinking to rid thyself the easier hereaster of thy troublesome temptations or passions, by making a kind of composition, and giving them at present what they crave. The more thou givest them, the more they will demand, and the more they will tyrannize over thee. 'Tis not by yielding, but by fighting resolutions.

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Confider 2dly, my foul, thy Saviour prefenting himfelf to thee on this occasion, with all his wounds, and all the difgraceful attire of his ragged robes, and thorny crown; with an Ecce home, behold the man. But fee thou look upon him with other eyes than those unhappy miscreants did, who only took occasion from the fight of his fufferings, to cry out more eagerly, away with him, away with him; crucify him, crucify him. O! behald the man, even the eternal Word of the father. made man for the love of thee. Behold his head crowned with a wreath of tharp thorns, piercing and entering in on all fides, with excessive pains; behold his face bruifed beyond measure, and all covered with blood and spittle: behold, through his ragged purple, the innumerable stripes and wounds of his mangled body. Behold and fee to what a condition thy fins, and his own infinite charity have reduced the Lord of glory. Then fee and confider what return thou wilt make him, for all his fufferings, and for all his love. fires no other return but that of thy heart; but then it must be an humble and a contrite heart; it must be a loving and an obedient heart.

Consider 3dly, the eternal Father presenting his Son to us in his passion, all covered with wounds, and embrewed in his blood, with another Ecce home, Behold the man. Setting before our eyes all that he has suffered out of pure love for us; representing to us his infinite goodness and mercy, and the heinousness of our sins and ingratitude to him; encouraging us to hope in him; inviting us to love him, and to detest our sins for the love of him; and offering us all good things through him;

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only desiring that we would cease to persecute him by sin. O give attention, my soul, to this loving voice of thy God, and to all the sufferings of his Son: but, in return, do thou also present him to his Father with the like Ecte home, Behold the man: laying before him all that his Son has endured for thee, in the whole course of his passion; and putting in thy claim to all that mercy, grace, and salvation, which he has purchased for thee, by all these sufferings. In particular, insist upon this one savour to be granted thee, through his passion and death, that thou mayst never more be disloyal to him.

Conclude, by representing all thy miseries and fins to thy Redeemer, and, through him, to his Father, with another *Ecce homo*, Behold the man: and begging a redress from him, and through his precious blood, of all thy miseries; and the remission of all thy fins.

#### Friday in Passion-Week.

On the part the bleffed Virgin bore in her fon's fufferings.

ONSIDER first, the forefight the bleffed Virgin had of the passion of her Son, from the time that the heard that prophetic prediction addressed to her by holy Simeon, Luke ii. 34, 35. that he should be fet for a sign which should be contradicted; and that a found should pierce ber own foul. Yes, bleffed Lady, a fword indeed, far more sharp and penetrating than any earthly steel, which can only pierce the body, and cannot reach the foul; whereas this fword, of more than mortal anguish, which thou sufferest by occasion of the passion of thy Son, inflicts a most bitter, deep and deadly wound, in the very midst of thy foul. A wound, which began to be inflicted at the time of this prophecy, by the fense which the heavenly Father then gave thee, of what thy Son was to fuffer; a wound, which was a most bitter alloy of all those consolations which thou receivedit, from the fight, conversation by

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and embraces of thy Jefus; a wound which thou carriedle about with thee in thy foul, all the time of his mortal life; still growing upon thee, as the time of his paffion grew nearer; and not healed but by his glorious. refurrection. Christians, see how the greatest favourites of heaven, by divine appointment, meet with the greatest crosses, in this mortal pilgrimage. But no wonder: Chrift himself was first to suffer, and so to enter into his glory; his bleffed mother and all the Saints were to walk in the same road, in order to follow him, and to partake in his glorious kingdom. O! think not much if your Lord chuses for you, what he chose for himfelf, for his bleffed mother, and for all his elect. Confider 2dly, how much the affliction and anguith of this Virgin Lady was encreased, when the news was brought her, of her Sons being betrayed by Judas, apprehended, bound, and dragg'd away, in that inhuman manner, before the council; and what treatment he had met with there, after being condemned by them. But as the fight usually affects us more than the hearing; fo doubtless this blessed mother was oppressed with a far more killing grief, when, on the next morning. the was an eye-witness of all the injuries, outrages, and torments, which he fuffered in the different frages of his passion. For as no love, that any person upon earth has ever experienced, could any ways approach to the love the bore our Lord, not only as her Son, but much more as her God: fo, in proportion to her love, her anguish and forrow, to see him treated in that cruel, barbarous and outrageous manner, was the greatest that any pure creature could ever sustain; and nothing less than a miracle could support her, or keep her alive, under fo dreadful a torture. Ah Christians the whips, thorns, and nails, that pierced his flesh, pierced her heart with unexpressible pain and forrow, which none furely could ever exceed, but these of her Son, the man of forrows. O take pity, my foul, on the forrows of them both, and fee thou never more

concur to grieve them by fin. -no Die thou received & Rom the light, converlation

Confider 3dly, more in particular, how the Bleffed Virgin was affected when the first saw her Son, in the morning, in the hands of his enemies, all disfigured by their blows, with his hands tied behind him, his face covered with spittle, and his hair all rent and torn. my foul, even fo hard a heart as thine, could fcarce bear fuch a fight as this: much less her tender heart! But what was this, in comparison with what she endured when he was fo cruelly fcourged at the pillar; when he was crowned with piercing thorns, and buffeted by a whole band of foldiers? O what pangs did she suffer, when the faw him prefented to the people with the Ecce bomo, Behold the man! how did the then feel in her foul all those wounds she there discovered in his head and body? Nor did the fuffer lefs, but rather much more, when she followed him in his last journey to mount Calvary, bearing his cross on his mangled shoulders, and marking the way with his facred blood. But what was all this, if compared with what she endured, when she heard the strokes of the hammers driving the mails into his hands and feet; when she saw him hoisted up into the air, and there hanging extended, as upon a rack, and supported by his wounds; when standing near the crofs, she saw the extremity of the torture he there endured; contemplated the multitude, and variety of his fufferings; heard his last dying words; and faw him give up the ghost? O how truly might she then cry out with the prophet, O all you that pass by the toay, attend and fee, if there be forrow like to my forrow! Lament. i. 12. Learn, my foul, from this queen of for-Fows, with what eye thou oughtst to look upon the sufof ferings of the Son of God, and how to bewail those fins Which have given cause to them. an put to draub adt

Conclude to imitate the virtues, of which this bleffed Lady has given us an illustrious example, in this martyrdom she endured under the cross of her son respecially learn her courage and fortitude under such bitter sufferings; her patience and perfect conformity to the will of God; her lively saith and hope. These must support thee also, under all thy crosses.

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# and a Saturday in Passion-Week.

Our Lord is condemned to the crofs.

covered with willies, and die asstalt tent and torn. O ONSIDER first, how the Jews, perceiving that Pilate was bent upon releafing our Saviour, told him, that if he released that man, he could be no friend of Cefar (the emperour) for whofoever made himfelf a king, opposed Cesar. (St. John xix. 12.) See here, my foul, what evils human respects are capable of producing; and how fad a thing it is, either to fear or to love any thing more than God. Pilate's resolution in a moment falls to the ground, upon the apprehension of being accused to Cefar, and of losing his favour; rather than risk this, he is determined to make a facrifice of his conscience, in condemning the innocent. Alas! have we never had a share in the like guilt? Has not human fear, or the apprehension of what the world would fay, too often influenced us to condemn, at least in fact, our Lord and his doctrine, by mortal fin? Has not a much less consideration than the fear of losing the favour of an emperour, prevailed, on these occasions, over our best resolutions? O what hold do we give to the enemy, by these human fears, and by our irregular affections to this cheating world! But fee the vain excuses by which men seek to palliate the guilt of their fins; and to falve their conscience: Pilate washes, his hands, and cries out; I am innocent of the blood of this juft man: look you to it, Matt. xxvii.24. as if this ceremony and verbal declaration, could clear him, in the light of the just judge, from the guilt of concurring to the death of the innogent. But see also, into what dismal extremities unhappy fouls cast themselves, when they are once obstinately bent upon fin, in that dreadful fentence which the Jews pronounced against themselves on that occasion: His blood be upon us, and upon our children. vincacomon ibatea, bris concine antici soni

of death against the Lord of life, and sentences our Sa-

viour to the crofs, in compliance with the cry of the whole people, still calling out, in a tumultuous maniner, Crucify him, crucify him. But O! my foul, reflect that it was the voice of thy crying fins that far more effectually called for the death of the Son of God. than the cry of the lews : for that tunnelt could have had no power to bring on his crucifixion; had not he been determined to fuffer this kind of death for the expiation of thy fins. But fee with what loud huzzas, with what triumph and joy, this sentence is received by the enemies of our Lord, and with what fighs and tears, with what grief and anguish, by his friends; and most especially by his blessed mother. But how does this Lamb of God behave on this occasion? In what manner does he receive this fentence of death? He receives it in silence and peace, with perfect submission and conformity to the will of his Father: he receives it even with joy, out of his infinite charity for us, as the only means of our redemption and falvation. See, my foul, whether thou submittest to thy crosses with the like dispositions. Dost thou embrace them as the means of divine appointment to bring thee to heaven?

Consider 3dly, that this fentence of death, pronounced against our Lord, was an act of the highest injustice on the part of Pilate; but highly just on the part of God; in consideration of our fins, which his Son had taken upon himself. And therefore, our Saviour, who was infinitely holy, could not indeed but abhor the crime of Pilate, though he suffered it; but as to the judgment and fentence of his Father, he embraced it, as being most holy and just : he bowed down, and adored it with all the powers of his foul. To teach us, and all that defire to be his disciples, to distinguish, on the like occasions, when we have any thing to suffer from others, between man's injuffice, and God's juftice : and to receive our fufferings from what hand foever they come, and how unjustly foever, as highly just from the part of God, punishing us, by thele infruments, for our fins, the state bear lives and set thou

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Conclude with thanksgiving to the infinite charity of the Father, who, for the love of us, spared not his own Son; but gave him up for us all, and sentenced him to die; and to the infinite charity of the Son, for embracing so cordially this sentence of death for the love of us. Make an oblation, in return, of thy whole self, both to the Father and to the Son; and desire henceforward to live only for him, who has delivered himself up to death for the love of thee.

N.B. Palm Sunday being kept in memory of our Saviour's solemn entry into ferusalem, sive days before his passion; to correspond to the devotion of the day, we shall here insert a meditation upon that subject, and interrupt the course of the considerations on the passion.

# Palm-Sunday.

On our Lord's triumphant entrance into Jerusalem.

CONSIDER first, how the time now drawing near, when our Saviour was to offer up himself a facrifice for the fins of the world; he was pleased to come to the place where he was to compleat this facrifice. And as, in order to fulfill the ancient figures, he chose that very night for the institution of the passover of the new law, which was fet alide for the immolation of the paschal lamb in the old law; and that very day for the redemption of the world, in which God's people had formerly been redeemed from their Egyptian bondage; so also he was pleased to make his entry into Jerufalem, in order to his facrifice, on the very day on which by the appointment of the law, Exedus xii. 3. the lamb was to be brought to town, which was to be facrificed for the paffover. Contemplate here, O Christian foul, the greatness of that love and charity for thee, which pushes thy Saviour forward on this occafion: fee the joyful readiness with which he goes to ofter up himself to death for the love of thee: admire and

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and adore the dispositions of his providence; who was pleased that the glory of his birth should be hidden in the obscurity of a poor stable in little Bethlehem; whilst he chose for the ignominy of his passion, the great theater of Jerusalem, and the paschal time, when the whole nation of the Jews was assembled thither.

Confider 2dly, the manner, in which our Lord was pleased to be received on this day, by a solemn procession of the people; strewing their garments in the way, and bearing branches of palm-trees in their hands, to teffify his victory over the prince of darkness; and accompanying him with loud acclamations, and Hofannas of joy, to honour him as their king and Messias. See, my foul, if thou art in proper dispositions to join in this triumphal procession, and with a palm branch in thy hand, to celebrate the victory of thy Lord over death, fin and hell: alas! with what face canst thou attend him on this occasion, if thow art still a flave to death, fin, and hell? Reflect also here on the inconstancy of the world; and how little account thou art to make of the esteem and applause of men: when thou feest, how this fame people, who on this day received our Lord with these loud Hosannas, and acknowledged him for their king, and their Saviour, five days after, cried out, away with bim: away with him: crucify him: crucify him.

Consider 3dly, the dispositions of the soul of our Redeemer, in the midst of these honours, and acclamations; and how little he is affected with them. See how, upon this occasion, he weeps over the unhappy Jerusalem, and over every impenitent soul, that like Jerusalem, takes no notice in this ber day, of the things that are for her peace: but lets slip the time of her wistration, St. Luke xix. 42, 44. Learn from his very triumph, his love of poverty, and his meekness, in the manner of his riding into Jerusalem, upon an ass's colt. Give ear to the prophet (Zach. ix. 9.) Rejoice—O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy king will come to thee; the just, and the Saviour: he is paor, and riding upon an

for &c. O fee thou imitate his humility, whilst thou

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Conclude to honour the trumph of thy Saviour, in he best manner thou art able in the procession of his day. Acknowledge him for the king and Lord of thy heart, and invite him in thither. But fee that fin and hell have no place there.

### Monday in Holy-Week.

Our Saviour carries bis cross.

ONSIDER first, how, upon Pilate's pronouncing fentence against our Lord, they immediately proceed to execution: and first they strip him of his purple robe, and cloath him again with his own garments; then they bring him the cross, which he was to carry on his shoulders to mount Calvary, as Isaac formerly did the wood, upon which he was to be offered in facrifice. But O! who can express, or conceive, the affection of foul, with which our Saviour embraces this cross; which he is now going to consecrate with his precious blood: this cross deligned to be the happy instrument of our redemption; the altar of his facrifice; the throne of his mercy; the trophy of his victory: the eternal monument of his love; the refuge of finners: the comfort of the afflicted; the glory of his elect; the school of all virtues, and the source of all our good! O my foul, what are thy fentiments with regard to the cross of Christ? Thou must embrace the cross with him? if thou defirest to reign with him. Give ear to a great fervant of God, expressing his affection to the cross, in this pathetic manner. 'I how down to thee, O precious crofs, confecrated by the embraces, and by the blood of Jefus, my Lord, and my king. I look upon

' thee as the standard of his armies; as the watch tower

hewing forth its light, to guide his elect, in this fformy

ocean; as the defence of his fervants; and as the mark and badge of his children. I adore thee, O hid-

den wisdom! O light unknown to the world! the

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honour of them that follow thee, the fafety of them that carry thee, the crown of them that embrace thee, the reward of them that love thee, and the falvation of them that cast themselves into thy arms. 'To die on thee is to live, and to live on thee is to reign. He that loves thee, is content; he that defires thee, is easy; he that possesses thee is rich. I bow down to thee, O tree of life, the fruit of which, is ' the folid food of the children of God. O balance. ever even, in which alone we discover the just value, and the true price of all things . . . . In thee is found health and life, the victory over hell, the fweets of · Paradife, strength of heart, joy of spirit, perfection of virtue, and affurance of eternal goods, &c. I embrace thee, O holy cross, consecrated by the sweat. and by the blood of my Saviour. Thou shalt be henceforward my refuge, my light, my knowledge, and all my wisdom. Forfake me not, keep not at a distance from me, tho' this flesh of mine dreads thee. and feeks to fly from thee-O fasten me to the cross with thee, my fweet Jesus, and enlighten me with thy admirable light; that my spirit may penetrate into the depth of the mysteries, and of the wisdom of the cross.' Sufferings of Jesus, Chap. xlii. My foul, are these thy sentiments?

Confider 2dly, and take a view of the Lamb of God, fetting out upon this his last, most wearisome, and most painful journey of his mortal life; loaded with the enormous weight of the cross; and with the far more intolerable weight of the fins of the world. See the length, and whole fize of the cross, proportioned to bear the weight of a human body suspended in the air; and reflect how little strength, remains in his body, after so many sufferings and fatigues; and the loss of so much blood. Ah! how rough, how hard, how insupportable then, is this load, to his shoulders and back, all mangled, rent and torn with the whips and scourges! How does it press upon his green wounds, and squeeze out his facred blood all the way! O mark this his last procession. A crier leads the way publishing his pretended

tended crimes and blasphemies: then follow the soldiers and executioners, with ropes, hammers, nails &c. And after them goeth, or rather creepeth along, our high priest and victim, all bruised and bloody; and staggering under the burthen of his cross: attended with a thief on each hand; and furrounded with a multitude of his enemies, infulting over him, and loading him with fcoffs, reproaches, and curfes; whilft the cruel hangmen, at every turn, are hastening him forward with their kicks and blows. Follow thy Lord, my foul, in this his last and most painful procession; offer him what service thou canst, to ease him of some part of his burthen: weep over him, at least, with the good women that followed him: but take notice of his admonishing them, rather to weep for themselves, and for their children: and fee how, in the midst of all his fufferings, he is much more concerned for our miseries and fins, than for any thing he himself endures. bleffed be his infinite charity for us poor finners.

Consider 3dly, how our Lord, having for some time, with unspeakable labour and torment, carried his cross through the streets; at last falleth down under the enormous weight of it, unable to carry it any longer. with what a shock does he fall! with what an additional torture to his wounded body; now quite exhaufted with pain and labour, and loss of blood! See how the bloody executioners employ their kicks and blows, to oblige him to rife again with his burthen: but all in vain; his strength is quite gone; he is not able to carry it any farther. Therefore, lest his execution should be delayed, they lay hold on Simon of Cyrene, whom they met coming out of the country, and they oblige him to take up the cross, and to ease our Lord of part of the burthen, by carrying it after him. But O! who shall ease him of any part of that other load, infinitely more insupportable, which his heavenly Father has laid upon him, of the fins of the whole world? My foul, do thou give him what little ease thou canst, by lamenting the share thy fins have in this tragedy, and by ceasing hence-

forward to afflict him by fin.

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Conclude to run in, and offer thy service to thy Redeemer, on this occasion, to take up his cross for him, and to help him, like Simon of Cyrene, in the carriage of it: or rather offer thyself to him, to take up thy own cross, with perfect refignation and patience, and to follow him. 'Tis this he particularly calls for, and expects at thy hands.

# Tuesday in Holy-Week.

Our Saviour is nailed to the cross.

CONSIDER first, how our Lord, being at length arrived at mount Calvary, quite wearied and spent; the untired malice of his enemies, purfuing him Itill, finds out a new torture for him, by mingling gall with the wine that, according to custom, was prefented as a firengthening draught, to criminals that were to be executed. Our Lord, that he might suffer the more for us, was pleased by taffing it to embitter his palate, parched up before with a violent thirst; but he would not admit of the comfort, that the drinking of it might have afforded his stomach, When he had tasted, he would not drink, St. Matt. xxvii. 34. And now they ftrip him violently of his cloaths, which by this time began to cleave fast to his mangled body; being pressed into the wounds by the weight of the cross: so that all his wounds are now opened afresh, and this Lamb of God is in a manner flayed alive, in order to be laid on the aftar of the cross. O! my foul, see how he stands, all covered with his blood, with his eyes lifted up to heaven; with infinite charity praying for poor finners; and even for his very executioners. O! run in now, and cast thyself at his feet; and bathe thyself in that precious blood, which he fo plentifully fheds for thee: but fee thou mingle with it thy penitential tears, in confideration of the thare thou haft had, in bringing these sufferings upon him, by thy fins.

Confider 2dly, how all things being now ready, they order him to lye down upon the cross. He obeys without without refistance or demur, and lays himself down upon this hard bed, on which he is to die: this bed of forrow, on which he is to bring us forth to God. he lyes, with his eyes fixed on heaven, as high priest of all mankind, offering himself a victim of propitiation for our fins, to his eternal Father; and freely giving up his hands and feet to the executioners, to be pierced with the nails. See now, my foul, how one of thefe ruffians comes with a large sharp nail, and fixing the point of it upon the facred palm of one of our Saviour's hands, violently drives it with his hammer into the tender flesh, forcing its way, with inconceivable torment, through the nerves, finews, muscles, and bones, of which the hand is composed, deep into the hard wood of the cross. The extremity of pain, which was caused by the violent piercing of fo many nerves and bones, as meet in the hands, made all the nerves and finews fhrink up, and draw the body towards that hand that was nailed: fo that great violence was used by the executioners, in dragging the other arm and hand to the oppointe nde, to the place prepared for it; where they erved it in like manner. And then, with equal barbarity, they drew down his facred feet, and nailed them lo to the cross. Verifying that of the prophet, Pf. xxi. They have dug my hands and feet: they have numbred all my bones: inafmuch as, by the violence of their pulling, the bones of our Lord were to drawn from their places, and disjointed, that they might be numbred . Ah! sweet Saviour, who can conceive the east part of what thou hast here endured for the love of me?

Consider 3dly, what shocks, what tortures, our Lord being now nailed fast to the cross, must have suffered in his whole body, when they dragged the cross along the ground, to the hole prepared for it: how much, when they began with ropes to raise him up into the air; how much, when they let the foot of the cross fall with a jolt into the hole; how much, when they fastened it in the ground, with large stakes, which they drove in with their mallets. O! who can think, without hor-

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rour, on the racking pains that every motion or shock of this nature must have caused to a body all disjointed, and supported only by the bones and sinews of the hands and feet, pierced through with groß nails! But tho' this torture, which our Lord here endured, was fo great and insupportable, that one would think it might have moved the hardest heart to compassion, to have feen even a brute beaft undergo fo much : yet fuch was the infatiable malice of the enemies of our Saviour, that instead of shewing him any pity, or relentingat the fight of his torments, they shout and triumph, when they see him appear above the heads of the people; and drawing nigher, they stand shaking their heads at him, rejoicing at all his fufferings, fcoffing, and infulting over him. Christians, whilst you detest this Jewish malice, see you have no share in it, by your obstinacy in sin; crucifying again to yourselves the Son of God, and making a mockery of him, Heb. vi. 6.

Conclude, by detesting the handywork of your sins, which have nailed your Saviour to the cross; and by loving him, who out of pure love for you has endured so much. O! that we could say here with the martyr Ignatius, and with the like affection; My love is fasten-

ed to the crofs.

### Wednesday in Holy-Week.

On the sufferings of our Saviour on the Cross.

CONSIDER first, what our Lord suffers upon the cross, for the whole time that he continues living upon it, till he consummates his sacrifice. Draw near my soul, and sit down under the shadow of thy true lover, with a longing desire to be his scholar in this school of love. Contemplate at leisure the multitude and variety of his sufferings. And first, as to his sacred body; see how from the sole of the foot, to the top of the bead, there is now no soundness therein: see how it is all covered with wounds and blood. O how rough is this

hard bed of the cross to a body all torn and mangled! O how uneasy is this pillow of a thorny crown to his wounded head! See all the cruel bruises, with which his divine face is disfigured; and reflect on the smart and the pain of them. See how the whole body is violently stretched, and extended as upon a rack, with an unexpressible torture in all the joints and limbs. But, above all, remark those four streams of blood, those soundains of Paradise, that flow from the four most painful wounds of his hands and feet; and consider how the whole weight of the body, hanging by those gross nails, that pierce the nerves and bones, whilst it naturally sinks downwards, is continually rending and tearing his wounds, and encreasing his pains.

Consider 2dly, what our Saviour suffers interiourly in his foul, and thou shalt find it to be much more insupportable than all he endures in his body. Witness the unexpressible horrour he has for the fins of the world. all now lying upon him, and oppressing his foul with their infinite weight: his deep sense of those blasphemies, he hears uttered against the Deity; and the contempt they shew for his person, and his divine truths. Witness the anguish of his soul, to see the hardness, blindness, and reprobation, of his once chosen people the Jews; together with the final impenitence of Judas; and the eternal damnation of so many millions of fouls, for whom he is now offering himself in facrifice; every one of whom he loves more than his own life. Add to this, his grief to fee the unspeakable desolation of his bleffed mother, and of all his friends; and himself left, without any manner of relief or comfort, from any creature whatfoever; and even forfaken by his heavenly Father, and given up to the will and pleasure of his enemies. Ah! Christians, no tortures can be comparable to those of the foul!

Consider 3dly, that, besides these sufferings, both of body and soul, which our Lord endures on the cross, for the love of us; he is pleased, moreover, to suffer in all other ways, which any mortal can be liable to in this life. He suffers in his honour, by the disgrace of being based

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hanged between two thieves, and loaded with all kinds of reproaches and affronts : whe fuffers in his reputation, by outrageous calumnies and impositions: he fuffers in his goods, by being ftript of his very cloaths, (the all he had in this world) and exposed naked to shame and cold: he fuffers from all forts of people; from Jews and Gentiles; great and small; priests and laity; all conspiring, as much as they can, to add to his afflictions. His enemies infult, and triumph over him; his friends are ashamed of him; those whom he had favoured with his miracles declare against him; his difcirles keep at a distance, and are afraid of being involved in his punishments. His eyes see nothing but what may add to his anguish; his ears are entertained with nothing but injuries and blasphemies; his palate is afflicted with a mortal thirst; and his own body, by its weight, is a continual and most grievous torment to him. O fweet Jesus, how dearly hast thou paid for my fins lanting

Conclude to station thyself at the foot of the cross; and there to contemplate in the sufferings of thy Saviour, the enormity of thy fins, and the goodness of thy God: that thou may'st there learn, how thou art to detest thy fins, and to love thy God.

### Holy-Thursday.

On our Saviour's preaching from the crofs.

CONSIDER first, that the whole life and doctrine of Christ was a continual lesson to his followers, to renounce self-love, with its three wretched branches: viz. the lust of the sless, that is, the love of sensual pleasures: the lust of the eyes, that is, the love of the perishable goods of this world: and the pride of life. These are the unhappy sources of all our evils, which withdraw us from our allegiance to God; and make us exchange the sountain of life for poisonous puddles, that mean never satisfy our thirst. These are the soundations of a worldly and sinful life; and the broad road to death

death and hell. Alas I we love ourselves; and our own will more than God; we are ever full of ourselves; fensual, covetous, presumptuous, as if we were something; and we can bear with nothing, that opposes or contradicts us. But mark, in particular, my foul, the fermon which the Son of God preaches from the crofs; and fee how loudly he there condemns, from that pulpit, all the illusions of our felf-love, with all the maxims and practices of the world, and the unhappy attachments of worldlings to their carnal and fenfual affections. O! Remember, that what he fuffers is all by his own choice; and this not only to the end that he may expiate our fins, but also in order to undeceive us in the prepofterous judgment we make of things; and to teach us to embrace what he embraces, to despise what he defpifes, and to condemn what he condemns. Learn then, my foul, at the foot of the crofs, to overcome thy pride, by the great example of the voluntary humiliations of the Son of God; thy love of the world, by his voluntary poverty, and by his being stript of all things, and abandoned by all; and thy love of pleafure, by his voluntary fufferings and unexpressible torments.

Confider 2dly, that Jesus Christ, in offering himfelf upon the cross, a facrifice to his Father, without any manner of referve; and in dying in pure obedience to his heavenly will; preaches another excellent fermon to us, containing the whole perfection of a spiritual life; which confifts in giving our whole felves to God; and in being obedient unto death. Yes, Christians, if you defire to be perfect, you must learn of your dying Saviour, to make this offering of yourselves without referve, to his Father, and to your Father: you must join your offering with his; and make it by his hands, that it may be acceptable. You must make it every day, and oftentimes in the day. O! Give him then daily your foul and body; give him your understanding, your memory, and your will; give him your whole being, with all that belongs to it, both for time and eternity: and he will give his whole felf to yout? death happy

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ons sto ath happy exchange! Offer yourfelf then daily to do for him, whatfoever he pleafes; to fuffer for him, whatfoever he pleases; dedicate yourselves eternally to his love; and refolve to die a thousand deaths, rather than to forfeit in any thing, the obedience you owe to this your

Father, Maker, King, and God.

Consider adly, the particular lessons, that our Lord also gives us, in his seven last dying words upon the cross. 1. Of perfect charity to our enemies; by his praying for his, and excusing them to his Father: Father for give them, for they know not subat they do. 2. Of mercy and composion for finners; by the plenary Indulgence he imparts to the penitent thief. Amen. I fay to thee, this day thou halt be with me in Paradife. 3. Of duty to our parents, in his recommending his Virgin mother to the care of his beloved disciple; and of a filial devotion to her, as recommended for a mother to us all: Woman, Behald thy fon. --- Behold thy mother. 4. Of an earnest thirst for the conversion and salvation of all men; by that which he expresses in this word, I thirft. 5. Of fervent prayer to God under anguish and desolation; by the fervour of his prayer: My God, my God, why hast thou for saken me? 6. Of perseverance to the end, till we have consummated, that is, compleatly finished the work for which we came into the world; by that word of his, It is consummated. 7. Of committing ourselves, both in life and death, by a perfect resignation, into the hands of God, by his great example. Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit. O let us learn these last lessons of our dying Lord !

Conclude to frequent daily this school of the cross, if thou wouldst learn to be wife indeed. But more especially take care to fludy well, at the foot of the cross, those two most essential lessons, the renouncing thy own will, and embracing the will of God, by a resolute con-

dress at his destal both probability and

formity and obedience, even unto death.

### Good-Friday.

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On our Saviour's death upon the Crofs.

ONSIDER first, how our Lord, having uttered those last words of his, Father into thy hands I commend my Spirit, with a loud and strong voice, leans down his head, in perfect submission to his Father's will, and gives up the ghost, to consummate the great sacrifice of the redemption of the world. Stand aftonished, my foul, in the contemplation of this incomprehenfible mystery, that Life itself should die, to deliver thee from a second death, and to impart to thee eternal life. O! confider well who this is that hangs here dead before thy eyes? The Word, the Wisdom, the Son of the eternal God; the Lord of glory; the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the great Creator of heaven and earth. But O how ftrangely has he here debased himself! How wonderfully is he here metamorphosed for the love of thee! Draw near, however, in spirit, and cast thyself down at the foot of the cross; and there exercise thyself in acts of faith, hope, love, and contrition for thy fins; there pour forth thyself in the fight of thy God, in acts of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving; there make a total oblation of thyself to thy crucified Saviour, to be his, both in life and death, time and eternity.

Confider 2dly, how our Lord, in the midst of all the ignominies and torments of his passion and death, begins to reign from the cross: and is even there highly honoured and exalted by his heavenly Father. The title that hangs over his head declares him to be the King of the fews, even their Messias, of whom the prophets had delivered fuch wonders. All nature loudly proclaims him her king and her God. The fun withdraws his light, for the three whole hours that he hangs upon the cross; at his death the whole earth trembles; the rocks are split; the monuments are opened; the dead arise; the veil of the temple, that hangs before the inward fanctuary, is rent from top to bottom, to shew that the law,

and its figures, are all now accomplished, and the fanctuary of heaven laid open. See, my foul, how he already begins from the crofs, to verify what he had faid, St. John, xii. 32, If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all things to myfelf. One of the thieves, that were crucified with him, is the first that experiences this miraculous attraction, and in an instant is changed into a Saint: the centurion, or captain of the foldiers, that affifted at the execution, is the next; and loudly declares him to be the Son of God: and all the multitude of them that were come together to that fight, and faw the things that were done, return Ariking their breafts, St. Luke xxiii. 48. O dear Jesus, let my poor heart share also in this mercy; look down upon it now from thy cross, which thou hast chosen for the throne of thy mercy and grace; and be pleased to draw it also to thyfelf; and to make it wholly thine from hence. forth, and forever.

Confider 3dly, how our Lord, by his death, triumphs over all his enemies. He casts out Satan, the ruler of this wicked world, from his usurped dominions; and binds him up in chains, by greatly aoringing all the power of death, fin, and hell: he judges, and condemns the world with all its favourite maxims: he exposes, and pulls down human pride; he shews forth the folly of worldly wisdom; and the vanity and deceitfulness of earthly honours, riches, and carnal pleasures, and of all that is not agreeable to his cross: and he sets up this victorious standard for all nations, as the royal enfign of his kingdom, under which his true foldiers shall ever fight, and triumph over the world, the flesh, and the devil; till they arrive at the crown of life, which he has purchased for them by his death. But see, my foul, how, in the midst of all his triumphs, he invites in a particular manner, all poor finners to his mercy. See how, with his head bowed down towards them, he offers them the kifs of peace: fee how his arms are open to receive them: fee how all his gaping wounds invite them, to come and shelter themselves there from ord thy fervice upon the the divine wrath. O let us embrace these his offers of mercy, on this day of mercy!

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Conclude to celebrate, on this day, in the best manner thou art able, thy Saviour's victory over fin and hell. Adore him most profoundly under all the ignominy of his cross, acknowledge him for thy king, for the true king of thy heart, and beg that he would henceforward abolish the reign of sin in thee. Embrace with all thy affection the facred wounds of his paffion, and chufe them for the place of thy habitation forever.

## Holy Saturday.

On our Saviour's burial.

ONSIDER first, how after our Lord had expired upon the cross, one of the Soldiers opened his fide with a spear, making a wide and deep wound, out of which there presently issued forth blood and water, to wash and cleanse us from all our stains. See, my foul. How the heart of thy Saviour is now laid open for thee. O! enter into it, in spirit, through this gate: O! make it thy dwelling place for evermore. Consider in this mysterious blood and water, issuing from the fide of our Lord, the heavenly facrament's, which iffue from his wounds, (inasmuch as they have all their virtue from his facred passion) but especially the facrament of his body and blood, and that of the facred laver of baptism. See also here, how our second Adam being now cast into the deep sleep of death, his fide is opened, to form from thence his church, defigned to be his everlasting bride.

Consider 2dly, how Joseph of Arimathea (who before durst not declare himself a disciple of Christ) having obtained of Pilate leave, to take away his body, for decent burial; being accompanied with Nicodemus; and joined in this last duty with St. John, and other disciples, unnailed the sacred body, and took it down from the cross. Run in, Christian foul, in spirit, and offer thy fervice upon this occasion: receive into thy

arms

arms the dead corpse of thy Redeemer; and lay it on the facred lap of his Virgin Mother: and learn from her whole comportment at this melancholy ceremony, the fentiments of a most affectionate devotion, towards the paffion and death of her Son. Join in embalming thy Saviour's body; and wrapping it up in clean linnen, and laying it in a new monument: by learning the exercice of those virtues, which are fignified by those aromatical spices and perfumes; and by that clean linnen, and new monument. Especially whenever thou approachest to the body of our Lord, in the blesfed facrament, fee thou take along with thee the fweet odours of devotion, a pure conscience, and the cleanness of the new man.

Consider 3dly, how our Lord, lying now in his monument, verifies that of the Pfalmift, Pf. lxxxvii. I am counted among them that go down to the pit: I am become as a man without help, free among the dead. Like the flain fleeping in the sepulchres, whom thou remembrest no more: and they are cast off from thy hand. They have laid me in the lower pit; in the dark, and in the shadow of death. Thou hast put away my acquaintance far from me &c. yes, my foul, thy Saviour lies now that up, in a lonefome monument, in darkness, like one dead for always: and as fuch is left and forfaken by his living friends and acquaintance. See thou leave him not but stay with him; and watch at his sepulchre in prayer. Weep there over him; with tears of compaffion for his fufferings, of compunction for all thy fins, and of a tender love for his infinite goodness, and his love for thee.

Conclude to keep thyfelf always near to thy Saviour, by daily meditating on his life and death; and thou mayst confidently hope, that he will always be near descript of and

thee, both in life and death.

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### Easter Sunday.

On the resurrection of our Lord.

ONSIDER first, how the foul of our Saviour' immediately after his death, descends into the lower parts of the earth, to visit and comfort the spirits of the just, to discharge them from their long confinement, and to change their prison, by his presence, into a paradife of delights. O how happy, how joyful a day was this to all the patriarchs and prophets; when they were first blessed with the fight of him, for whom they had longed for fo many ages! How glorious was the fight, of his triumph over all the powers of darkness; of his breaking down the strongholds of hell; and giving a plenary indulgence to as many fouls as were capable of it, by their having died in the true faith, and in the state of grace. In the mean time whilst the foul of our Lord is exercifing this charity, the blind malice of his enemies fuggests to them, to make fast his fepulchre, and to guard it with foldiers; under pretence of preventing his disciples from stealing away his body, and then publishing that he was rifen from the dead. But O how vain are all the projects of men against the decrees of God! All this industry of theirs only serves to put the refurrection of our Lord out of all dispute; by rendering it absolutely impossible for his disciples (had their terrours and troubles allowed them fo much as the first thought of such an unheard of enterprize) to Iteal him away, tho' they had ever so great a desire of it. So true is that of the wiseman, Prov. xxi. 30. There is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel against the Lord.

Consider 2dly, how early in the morning, on Easter Sunday, being the third day, the day appointed for our Lord's resurrection, his soul returns in triumph from the regions below, and entering into his sacred body, imparts to it a new and immortal life; and instead of the winding sheet, in which it had been wrapt

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up, cloaths it now with all the glorious qualities, decreed for the bodies of the faints, in a supereminent degree: and fo brings it forth without refistance, through the monument (tho' hewed out of a rock; and close covered with a very great stone, fastened down with irons) unperceived by the guards, who were not worthy to fee him, in this glorious state. Yet that they, and all the world, might know that he was rifen indeed; they felt a great earthquake; and an Angel, visibly descending from heaven, removed the stone, that covered the entrance of the monument, and fat down upon it. The fight of this bright messenger of heaven carried with it fuch a terrour, that the guards became like men dead; and affoon as they were able to recover themfelves, run away into the city: publishing the wonders they had feen; till the chief priefts and elders floot their mouths with a large fum of money. Rejoice thou my foul, to fee thy Saviour thus victorious over all his enemies: and learn from this great example, to bear up with courage under all thou may'ft have to fuffer from the wickedness of men; trusting in God, that he will one day turn all thefe thy fufferings to thy greater good.

Consider 3dly, those words of the Psalmist, which are applied by the church, in the office of this day, to the refurrection of our Lord. This is the day which the Lord bath made: let us be glad, and rejoice therein. Pf. cxvii. Yes, christian souls, if you have taken part in the fufferings of your Redeemer, by the affections of compassion and grief, at the fight of all those outrages, and torments he endured, in the course of his paffion: 'tis just you should rejoice, now the scene is changed, at the fight of his being rifen from the dead, victorious over death and hell; and his being now entered upon a new and everlasting life; for that he can die now no more, nor fuffer any more. Rejoice then with a holy joy, in the Lord: and join with the church on this day in her repeated alleluias: because your best friend, your true lover, your dear father, your king, your Lord and God, is rifen again. ed

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this is the day of his triumph: he is now out of all reach of his enemies; and shall live and reign glorious for evermore. But see, my soul, whether thou art in proper dispositions, to celebrate with this hely joy, the resurrection of thy Lord by Hast thou endeavoured to die with him, in order to rise again with him? Hast thou put off the old man and his deeds? Hast thou crucified the slesh and it's lusts? Or does not sinstill live and reign in thee? If so, how melancholy a reslexion must it be, to think that this monster, for the destruction of which Christ died, should still keep thee under slavery, strugling with the worst of deaths, whilst thou art celebrating the festival of thy Saviour's rising to a new and immortal life!

Conclude, if thou defirest to have a share in the triumphs of thy redeemer, to imitate his death, by dying to thy sins; that so thou mayst also imitate his resurrection; and walk henceforward in the newness of life, after the great model, given to thee by Jesus Christ.

### Easter-Monday.

On the lessons we are to learn from the resur-

ONSIDER first, that according to the doctrine of the apolile, Rom. iv. 25. Christ was delivered up to death for our fins: and rose again for our justifiration: inafmuch as his rifing again from the dead, was defigned to be the model of our refurrection, from the death of fin to the life of grace. But in what must our refurrection imitate that of Jesus Christ? First we must imitate him, by rising verily and indeed; that is, truly and really; and not in appearance only. Alas! how many, at this time of Easter, pretend to rife again with Christ, by going to confession and communion, according to the custom of Christians at this scason: and yet after all only deceive themselves, and impose upon others, with false appearances of life; ind never rise in effect? Because they do this great work this T 2

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but by halves: their heart is not changed : they do not effectivally renounce their fins: their pretended refurrection is but an empty airy phantom; they are full dead in their fins. See my foul, that this be never thy case. Ahl what will it avail thee, to deceive thyself and thy confessor, with these treacherous appearances of a false life, which can only serve to plunge thee

deeper into the worst of deaths hasis ve was bug bag

Confider adly, that when Christ role again from the dead, hepresently quitted his monument, he left his winding sheet behind him; and retained nothing at all of death: and from that time he had little conversation with mortals; but only with his heavenly Father: to teach us, that if we would rife with him to the purpose; we must also quit our winding sheets, and monuments, and all the appurtenances of death; by renouncing bad company, and the dangerous occafions of fin; by keeping our paffions under; and by breaking the force of all former bad habits; till no fymptoms of death remain in us. But then, in order to walk in this new ness of life, we must aim as much as we can to walk with God, by an inward folitude, and a recollection of spirit; and to have our conversation in heaven, by frequent and fervent prayer. Give ear to the apostle, Colos. iii. If you be rifen with Christ, feek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God; mind the things that are above; not the things that are upon earth. For you are dead; and your life is kid with Christ in God. When Christ shall appear, who is your life; then shall you also appear with him in glory. O that we were always posfessed with these sentiments! O that we could die to all things else, that we might truly live in God, with Chrift, and through Chrift!

Consider 3dly, that Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more, death shall no more have dominion over him: Rom. vi. 9. So that, if we would imitate his refurrection, we must also rise in such manner from the death of fin, as to die no more, by returning again any more to our fins ; but to recken ourfelves henceforward

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forward, to be dead to fing but alive to God in Christ Telus dur Lord vort. This them is the great lefton we must learn from the refurrection of Christ : we must rife with him, fo as to continue forever to live with him; and to return no more to the dominion of death. Ah! christians, if you be now rifen indeed, from the death of fin, to the life of grace; dread a fecond death, by relapfing into mortal fine above all other evils, that can possibly befal you. O ! remember, that if the devil, who has been now cast out of your foul, fhould take possession of you once more, by a relapfe, he would bring with him feven other fpirits more wicked than himfelf and your last state would be worfe than the fir fi St. Matth xii. 4501 en doset ot.

Conclude with a hearty resolution of imitating, sin all these particulars, the resurrection of our Lord. But especially take your precautions against returning any more to the death of fin, after rifing with Christ to 2 new life. To prevent fo great an evil, be diligent in all your religious duties; be constant and fervent in prayer; flee all dangerous occasions; and keep up in your foul a perpetual horrour for that hellish monster fin. O! beg of God daily and hourly, that you may rather die a thouland deaths, than once confent to the apostle. Colust vis st you be colige with and vibash

# bash see to Easter Tuesday. The bash see

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On our Lord's shewing bimself to bis disciples after bis resurrection.

ONSIDER first, the haste that our Lord made to comfort his bleffed mother and his afflicted difciples, by manifesting himself to them immediately after his refurrection. As to his bleffed mother, tho the golpel is filent, we cannot doubt, but the was favoured with an early visit; that as she loved him most, and partook more than any other in the forrows of his passion, so she might also in the joy of his refurrection. Learn my foul from hence, that the way T 3 tor

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foothebialforto experience fomething of the vilus and comforts of heaven, is to fuffer, and to love of The good women, that went early in the morning to the monument, with their fweet fpices and ointments, to perfume the body of our Lord, were likewise favoured; first with a vision of Angels, and then with the fight of Christ himfelf: to teach us that the true way to find Christ, is to rife early to feek him; to go in quest of him, with the aromatical perfumes of ardent defires and devout affections; and to persevere in the fearch, without being discouraged with apprehensions of difficulties, and oppositions. These holy women were concerned, who should roll away the stone for them from the monument, that they might come at the body of our Lord, for it was exceeding greats but lo when they came to the place, they found the stone was rolled away to their hands: to teach us, that if we continue conftant in our good resolutions. God will remove those difficulties we apprehend, or enable us there confets his crime ment amorave to overcome them. smire sid states on the

Confider adly, the favour our Lord was pleafed to thew to penitent finners, at his refurrection, by honouring Magdalene amongst women, and Peter amongst men, with his first visits. Magdalene, from the time of her conversion, had constantly adhered to our Lord: The followed him even to the cross; the attended on him there till he gave up the ghoft; the faw his body laid in the monument; and after the repose of the Sabbath day; The was up before light, and was the first at the monument with her perfumes; when the found him not, the ran to the apostles, to tell them the body was taken away. Peter and John ran to the monument; and finding there the linnen cloths without the body went their way home again but Magdalene staid, and continued her fearch, weeping fand damenting, that the could not find him whom her foul loved; till at length the faw his heavenly messengers, and shortly after himself in person; and was sent by him as an apostle, to carry to the apostless themselves othe worful tidings of his refurrection. O happy tears of love ! love bill happy perfeverances to dee my louis thou feek thy Lord in the like manner, and thou wilt infallis good women, that went early in the main bnib yld

Confidentially, that Petery who from the time of his fall, had been continually weeping and bitterly bewaiting his fins, was the first of the apostles that was favoured with the fight of our bord on Gor xv. 31 and Luke, xxiv. 34. At the first news, brought by Magdalene, of our Saviour's body being missing, he took the alarm, and ran to the monument; and not finding the body there, went home, believing it had been taken away. But our Lord was pleased to remove this errour, by manifesting himself to him; and shewing him that body alive, which he had fought among the dead. O what fentiments of confusion, and repentance, for his having denied this Lord of glory, mixed with a holy joy, at the fight of his being now rifen from the dead, filled the foul of this apostle, upon this occasion! O how did he cast himself at the feet of his Lord, and there confess his crime: and how lovingly was he received to mercy, and favoured upon the fpot with a plenary indulgence and absolution! And not only that; but to flew the unspeakable bounty of our Lord to repenting finners; a little while after, when our Lord manifested himself to him again, St. John xxi; he was pleased to advance him to the supreme pastoral charge over all his flock, by committing to him all his lambs, and all his sheep; and to promise him the glory of following him, even to the dying upon a cross, for him wall in confequence of that most ardent love; of which he three times required a profession of him. (Lovest thou me more than these?) as it were in opposition to his three denials. The man and but and but

one Conclude, whatever thy case may be, and however thou may it have denied thy Saviour, by word or deed. to return now to him by repentance and love; and if thy fins be as red as fearlet, they shall be made as white as flow, Ifai i. 18. Love is the shortest way to the remisaffion of fine, and to all other good. To allious as an

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the exercice of hospitality and charity : to teach us, that the way to co. was blanked Went and of those

On our Lord's shewing himself to the disciples going to Emmans, Luke xxiv.

ONSIDER first, how two of the disciples, going from Jerusalem to a neighbouring town called Emmaus, on the very day of our Lord's refurrection, while they were discoursing together in the way, and making him the subject of their conversation, were also favoured with his prefence; yet in fuch manner as not to know him, He overtook them in the way, and joined their company; and, after upbraiding them with their flowness of belief, explained to them the feriptures, that related to his passion and refurrection; and enkindled in their hearts the fire of devotion. Christians, the great advantage of pious conversation; fuch especially as has Christ for its subject : it even draws him down from heaven into our company. We may, in some measure, apply to it what our Lord favs, St. Matt. xviii. 20. Where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there am I in the midft of them. What a pity then there thould be generally fo little of God in the conversation of Christians! Alas, how can this forgetfulness of God be reconciled with our loving him? We naturally delight to speak of what we love: for from the abundance of the heart the mouth (peaketh: how then can we flatter ourselves that the love of God is the mafter of our hearts, when we to feldom care to speak of him. Surely this is not the way to engage Christ to be in our company.

Consider 2dly, that our Lord was not known at first by these disciples, because their faith in him was weak and impersect. See, my soul, if the weakness of thy faith be not also the reason, why he does not manifest himself to thee, so as to let thee know him indeed, as the Saints have done. St. Gregory takes notice that these disciples were not enlightned, so as to know Christ, whilst they only heard his words: but were quickly

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enlightened, in the fulfilling of his commandments, by the exercice of hospitality and charity: to teach us, that the way to come at the knowledge of God, and of those truths, which as yet we are ignorant of, is to practise, to the best of our power, what we know already of his heavenly will. These disciples knew our Lord in the breaking of bread: to teach us, that there is no better way to come at the persection of the knowledge and love of God, than a worthy participation of the bread of life in the blessed eucharist.

Consider 3dly, how these disciples took notice, that their heart was burning within them; whilft they were in the company of our Lord, and enjoyed his heavenly conversation, St. Luke xxiv. 32. My soul, dost thou defire to experience fomething of these facred flames? Seek them in the company and conversation of Christ. Alas! the reason why thou art so lukewarm, or rather downright cold, in thy devotions, is the continual diffipation of thy thoughts at other times, and a habit of indulging vain amusements, which fill thy inward house with fuch difagreeable company, as keep Christ away from thee, and rob thee of his sweet conversation. how happy mightst thou be, if, by banishing all these impertinences, by a spirit of recollection, thou wouldst endeavour to keep thyself always close to thy Saviour, and, like the ancient Saints, to walk with him! A diligence in this would make thee begin to enjoy a heaven upon earth.

Conclude to study well these lessons, which our Lord desires we should learn from his manifestations of himself, after his resurrection. But especially learn to seek always the happiness of his company and conversation in thy own interiour: there is the school of divine love.

by these encircles, see an encircular not him was views and imperied not allo the realons why he does not manifelt faith be not also the realons why he does not manifelt himself to the se as to be the suppose him indeed, as the significant have cone. In the second the second the second their discount they were not enliquined to as to know Christ, whill they only heard his words: but were quickly

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On our Lord's manifesting bimself to all the Apostles, Luke xxiv, John xx.

ONSIDER first, how, on the evening of the fame day of our Lord's refurrection, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together, for fear of the Jews; our Saviour came in, and stood in the midst of them, and said to them, Peace be to you; and then shewed them the wounds of his hands, of his feet, and of his fide. Admire the qualities of his glorious body, now rifen from the dead, which, like a spirit, passes through the doors, and is feen on a sudden in the midst of his disciples: and yet shews itself to be true and palpable flesh, by exhibiting those sacred wounds, to be felt by their hands. See how on this occasion, he at once both informs their faith. and enflames their love, by bearing about him thefe marks of his passion, the most convincing testimonies of his love. My foul, thou haft this fame glorious body, with all its endowments, in the bleffed facrament; and tho' thou neither feeft it, nor feeleft his wounds, with thy bodily fenses, thy faith affures thee that he is there; and discovers to thy inward eye, both his whole passion endured for the love of thee, and the glory of his refurrection. Let this suffice to enkindle the fire of his love in thy heart: don't defire to fee, or to feel, his wounds, like Thomas; nor to lodge thy hand in his fide, but thy heart. Bleffed are they that have not feen, and have believed, John xx. 29.

Consider adly, how our Lord said again to his discriples: Peace be to you: as the Father hath sent me, I also send you. Then breathing upon them, he said: Received ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained. See how ample this authority is, which he here imparts to his apostles, and to their lawful successors; that is to the pastors of his true church, descend-

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ing from the apostles: as his heavenly Father sent him, even so he sends them; furnished as he was with all spiritual power, and jurisdiction, for the rule of his church, and the dispensation of his word, and of his Sacraments; and commissioned by him, as he was by his Father. Give thanks, my soul, to thy Saviour, for having lest, for thy benefit, this ample power and commission with the pastors of his church; and surnished thee by this means with guides, divinely commissioned, and divinely affisted; and given to them the keys, that they might open heaven to thee. See thou despite not the ordinance of God; nor proudly resist his commissioners, to thy own condemnation.

Confider 3dly, more in particular, the power of forgiving, or retaining fins, here imparted by our Lord to the lawful pastors of his Catholick church. Receive ye the Holy Ghoft: faid he, whose fins you shall forgive. they are forgiven to them: and whose fins you shall retain they are retained. In these words our Lord was pleased to communicate his divine Spirit, the Holy Ghoft, to his disciples, and their successors; in order to make them his delegates in the court of conscience; to fit as judges there, to take cognizance of all spiritual causes, and to pass sentence, either in favour of (penitent) finners, to loofe them from their fins by abfolutions, or to bind them, as the case should require, by censures, penances, or delay of absolution. Give thanks for this facred inftitution, fovereignly wholefome to Christian fouls: in which poor finners, that defire to return to their God, may by applying to the delegates of Christ, have the fentence of eternal damnation, that stood against them, reversed; and their absolution, pronounced on earth, ratified in heaven; upon the eafy conditions of an humble and fecret confession, joined with a hearty repentance : and in confequence of fuch absolution, may be again received, and admitted to the participation of all those goods, from which their fins had excluded them.

Conclude to adore, praise and give thanks to our Lord, for all those bleffings he brought with him, at

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his refurrection; and not only imparted to his disciples then living; but entailed upon his church forever. Particularly acknowledge, and embrace that last legacy, of his perpetual presence with his church, which he bequeathed on the same occasion, in the three last verses of the gospel of St. Matthew, when he said: All power is given to me in heaven, and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations &c. and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.

### Easter Friday.

On the peace of a Christian.

ONSIDER first, that as our Saviour, the night before his passion, bequeathed his peace to his disciples, faying, St. John xiv 27. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you: So also after his refurection, he three times wished them his peace saying, Peace be to you. St. John xx. But what kind of peace is this that he fo much inculcates, and fo earnestly defires to impart to us? Not the peace which the world pretends to give; which is false and deceitful, like itself: they fay peace, peace, and there is no peace. Ezek. xiii. 10. But the peace of God which surpasseth all understanding. Philip. iv. 7. A threefold peace; viz a peace of the foul with God; a peace with every neighbour; and a peace with herfelf. 'Tis both the duty, and the happiness of a Christian to maintain this triple peace. And first, whosoever defires any degree of happiness, either here, or hereafter, must take care to keep an inviolable peace with God, by ever fleeing wilful fin; which is at enmity with God. For how can there be any good for them, that are at war with God? who bath ever refifted him, and bath had peace? Job ix. 4. HThe wicked are like the raging fea, which connot reft and the waves thereof caft up dirt and mire there is no peace for the wicked: faith the Lord God. Ifut. Wif. telframed we much his 20, 21. of the delicable celcon-

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Confider 2dly, that the Christian cannot maintain his peace with God, if he does not also follow peace with all men, Heb. xii. 14, and, as much as lies in him, keep peace with all men, Rom. xii. 18. For as no man can love God, that does not love his neighbour; 1. St. John iv: fo no man can be at peace with God, that breaks peace with his neighbour. Tis then another branch, both of the duty, and of the happiness, of a Christian, to be at peace with every man; at least as far as lies in him, and in the unfeigned disposition of his foul: to renounce all animofity, and rancour; all discord and contention; all malice and envy; and whatfoever elfe is opposite to fraternal charity: and to learn to bear, and to forbear; which are the two great means of keeping peace with our neighbours; when, on our parts, we forbear giving them any offence, or provocation, either by word, or deed; and, at the fame time, bear with Christian meekness and charity, with all the offences or provocations we receive at their hands: and strive to overcome them, by rendering good for oviling O how amiable is this character of the peaceable Christian! O how much happier is fuch a foul. than one that is always in war, with one neighbour or another; and always in a storm at home, in his own interiout was in the state of t

Confider odly, that another necessary branch of the Christian speace, is to be at peace within himself; by flaving to banish from his own interious whatsoever may distorb the tranquillity of his foul. This inward peace, when it is perfect, is a certain foretafte of heaven init is a kind of a heaven upon earth. In fuch fouls God is pleased to dwell; of whom the royal prophet fings, Pf. lxxv. that his place is in peace, and his abode in Sion of To come at this happy peace, (besides taking care to keep peace with God, by a clean cobscience; and with every neighbour, by concord and charity) we must have our passions mortified; our affections well ordered and regulated; and our defires restrained: we must banish all hurry, and over cagarness, all sadness and melancholy; all scrupulous Vol. I. fears,

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fears, anxious cares, and uneafiness about the things of the world: and, above all things, and in all things, we must conform ourselves to the holy will of God. Practise these lessons, my soul, and thou wilt be at peace: at least as far as the condition of thy mortal pil-

grimage will allow of.

Conclude ever to aim at this threefold peace, with thy God, with thy neighbour, and with thyfelf: pray daily for it: and whatfoever fear, affection, or defire, or any other thing whatfoever, offers to disturb thy heart, shut the door against it, as an enemy, as a melfenger of Satan, who comes to rob thee of thy treasure, the peace of thy soul.

### Easter-Saturday.

On perseverance in good.

ONSIDER first, that every Christian ought, at this time, pursuant to the precept of the church of God, to have made his peace with God, and to have figned and fealed it with a worthy communion. So that it is the business of every Christian, now at least, to begin a new life; and to walk henceforward, in the newness of life, even to the end. Be thou faithful until death; and I will give thee the crown of life, faith our Lord, Apoc. ii. 10. Alas! what will it avail us to have made a good beginning at this time; if, after having been enlightened, and having tasted the heavenly gift, and been made partakers of the Holy Ghoft, &c. Heb. vi. 4, we should quickly fall away, and return to our former darkness, and to the husks of swine, under the flavery of Satan? Would not our latter condition become worse than the former? That this may never be our case, we must consider upon the means, that may effectually preserve us from relapsing into mortal sin; and that may maintain us in the happy state of the grace and love of God. In particular, we must labour to establish in our souls a horrour of the dreadful evil sof fin, and of all the dangerous occasions of it; to

keep up in ourselves a penitential spirit, for what is past; joined with a lively sense of that infinite mercy. that kept us fo long out of hell; and fo graciously received his prodigal children, when they offered to return to him; and with a firm resolution (which should be renewed every day, and every hour) for no confideration whatfoever, to turn our backs upon him any more by wilful fin. O'how happy is that Christian, who is ever ready to lay down his life, rather than to

return any more to fin!

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Consider 2dly, that another great means to persevere in good, is to live by rule and order: to renounce an idle life, as the mother of all evil; and to regulate our time, and all our daily exercices; to be constant in the performance of our devotions, and in frequenting the facraments; and to take care to do well all that we do. Sanctity, and perfection, does not fo much depend upon doing extraordinary actions, as upon doing our ordinary actions extraordinarily well: now we shall do them extraordinarily well, if we do them with a pure intention, for the love of God; and if we take care to season them with frequent and fervent aspirations to God. Thus, like the ancient Saints, shall we walk with God, and be perfect. This is the surest way to perseverance.

Confider 3dly, that, in order to perseverance in grace, it will be also necessary to set out, and to continue, in a full perswasion and conviction, that we have not a more dangerous enemy to our fouls, than our own felf-love, with all its branches and passions; that the gratifying our own humours, is gratifying a mortal enemy; that we must deny ourselves, renounce ourfelves, and hate ourselvs in this life, if we would fave our fouls for eternity. In a word, the mortification of our passions, and the total victory over ourselves, is the fovereign means of perseverance. In order to this, every Christian ought to study well to know himself, and the true state of his own interiour: that he may discover what passions are predominant there; and may turn all the forces of his foul against them, till he U 2

has quite subdued them. This warfare is one of the most essential duties of every disciple of Jesus Christ: no one shall be crowned by him, that has not sought, and conquered himself. To him that overcometh, he will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God. Apoc. ii. 7.

Conclude in order to perseverance in good, to practise well all these lessons, and particularly to be earnest with God in prayer, that he may be thy keeper, to keep thee from sin. O beg of God every day, that thou mayst rather die a thousand deaths, than once

commit a mortal fin!

### Low-Sunday.

On the sacrament of Baptism.

CONSIDER first, that we are often put in mind by the church, in the office of this time, of our baptism; to the end we may be rightly sensible of the dignity, to which we have been raised by this facrament; and of the obligations incumbent upon us in consequence of the same. Baptism is to our fouls the gate of life, an introduction to all that is good. It is called by the apostle, Tit. iii. g. The laver of regeneration and renovation in the Holy Ghost; inafmuch as we, who, by our natural birth from the old Adam, were born in fin, children of wrath, flaves of Satan, and liable to an eternal damnation; are dearfed from fin, and fantifyed, in this facrament, by the laver of water in the world of life, Eph. v. 25, in virtue of the blood of Chrift, here applied to our fouls: and by virtue of the same we receive a new birth: by which we are regenerated and renewed, being born again of water and the Holy Ghoft, St. John iii. 5; to a new and everlaste ing life; and are made children of the living God, and heirs of his eternal kingdom. See, my foul, and admire the riches of the bounty of thy God, poured out in thy favour, in this facrament. But O! take care! never to forfeit these excellent treasures by fin, nor to degenerate

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legenerate from this heavenly birth, by an unworthy

Consider 2dly, that, by baptism, we are incorporated n Chrift, and made living members of his mystical: body, which is his church: we are made Christians; brethren of Christ, and temples of his holy Spirit: we who before were not his people, are now the people of God 1. Pet. ii. 10. a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a poly nation, a purchased people, called out of darkness into the admirable light of Christ: v. q. We are dedicated, fanctified and confecrated to God, by this facrament, to be irrevocably his; eternally devoted to his divine love. O happy dedication! O my foul, how little hast thou hitherto reflected on these truths! How little haft thou confidered the dignity conferred upon thee in baptism! O Remember, that what is once dedicated to God, ought to remain always his: and that tis a facrilege to profane or violate what is once confecrated to him. See then, how pure and holy thy whole life ought to be, in consequence of thy being dedicated to God in baptism.

Consider 3dly, that all we who are baptized in Christ fosus, are baptized in his death: for we are buried together with him by baptism unto death: that as Christ is rifen from the dead, by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life, Rom. vi. 2.4. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of fin may be destroyed, and that we may serve sin no longer. v. 6. fo that henceforward, in confequence of our baptism, we must reckon ourselves dead to fin, but alive to God, in Christ Jesus our Lord, v. 11. and therefore, we must not let fin reign in our mortal body, so as to obey the lufts thereof, v. 12. But as Christ rifing again from the dead dies now no more, as death shall no more have dominion over him, v. o. so we must now die no more by in, in must no more have dominion over us. as many of us as have been baptized in Christ; have put on Christ, Galoiil. 27, and ought to live fo, as to thew forth the life of Christ, in our mortal flesh: that we may be able to fay with the apostle: I live, now

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mot I, but Christ liveth in me; Gal. ii. 20. Christians compare your lives with these divine lessons: see what they ought to be, by the obligation of your baptism : and fee what they have hitherto been. And now, at least, labour in earnest to begin to live, worthily of your calnling, and of the glorious name and character of a -Christian, and of a child of God. De of the grade

Conclude, to bear always in mind both the dignity, to which you have been raifed by your baptifm, and the obligations of it: and ever to shew forth in your lives, that you are Christians indeed, by a constant imitation both of the death and refurrection of the Son of change of the feed and to take policitum obtac.bodus

### Monday after Low-Sunday.

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On the covenant of baptism.

ONSIDER first, that, in baptism, we make a folemn covenant with God; by which he, on behis part, adopts us for his children; admits us to all the great and glorious advantages and prerogatives which belong to his children; and gives us an unquestionable right and title to the inheritance of his everlafting kingdom. But then, all this is upon articles; to which we, on our part, bind ourselves, by the strongest engagements and vows; which, if we violate, in that moment we forfeit both the dignity of children of God, and all the other excellent treasures we received at our baptism, together with all title either to the favour, or the kingdom, of God. The first of these articles, by which we engage ourselves to God in baptism, is the promise we there make, ever to adhere to him, by a firm and con-Hant faith of all his divine truths. My foul, hast thou been true to this part of thy covenant? The faith, which thou hast promised, was not a barren speculative belief, like that of those who make profession of knowing God, but deny him in their works, Tit. i. But a faith that worketh by charity, Gal. v. 6: A faith that firm the country of theweth the

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sheweth itself by thy life: the just man liveth by faith,

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Confider 2dly, that another article of our baptismal covenant was to wage a perpetual war with Satan; to renounce him forever, with all his works of darkness and fin, and all his pomps of worldly pride, and vain glory: and to adhere to God, by a strict and perpetual allegiance to his divine majesty. My soul, what has thy life hitherto been? Hast thou kept this covenant? Hast thou effectually renounced Satan? Hast thou constantly waged war against that usurper, that cruel tyrant, that mortal enemy of thy God? Or hast thou not suffered him to take possession of thee again by fin? Hast thou not been, all thy life long, his flave? Have not his works, and his pomps, had a greater share in thy affections, than thy duty and allegiance to thy God? O be confounded at thy past difloyalty, and breach of covenant! O dread the confequences of this perfidiousness! Repent and amend.

Confider 3dly, that in our baptism, we also engage ourselves to a strict observance of the whole law, and the commandments of our heavenly Father, our king, and our God; but more especially of the great commandment of loving him with our whole heart, with our whole foul, with our whole mind, and with our whole Arength; and of loving our neighbours as ourselves. For, inasmuch as he there adopts us for his children and his heirs, in return, he strictly requires of us the obedience due from children to fuch a Father; with a love of preference of him before all things elfe, and a perpetual conformity in all things to his bleffed will. See now. my foul, upon how many titles thou belongest to God; and art bound to love him, and to ferve him, with all nou thy powers. Thou art his by creation: he made thee ith, infor himself. Thou art his by redemption: the Son of ila- God has purchased thee with his own blood: Ah, at but confecrated to him in baptifm. And thou art his by that small the articles of the covenant, then made with him. theiren dis

Conclude to observe, henceforward at least, these thy baptismal vows: and, since God claims thy whole being upon so many titles; give thyself to him, without reserve, for time and eternity, by perfect obedience, conformity and love. O beg of him continually, that nothing in life or death may ever be able to separate thee any more from him.

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### Tuesday after Low-Sunday.

On the ceremonies of baptism.

ONSIDER first, that the ancient ceremonies, used by the Catholic church, in administring baptifm, are very instructive; inasmuch as they shew. forth both the effects of this facrament in the foul, and the duties incumbent on them that receive it. The person that is to be baptized, is initiated as it were in Christ: by professing his defire of coming to him, by faith, and the observance of the commandments; and then receiving upon his forehead, and upon his breaft, the fign of the cross: to signify that the cross and passion of Christ is the fource of all our good; that by this facrament we are dedicated to Christ crucified; and must ever wear his badge both on our forehead, and in our heart, Then the catechumen is feasoned, as it were, for baptism, by a grain of falt, solemnly blessed for that purpose; to signify the salt of true wisdom, and that chriflian prudence and discretion, which ought to season all we do; as also the seasoning of divine grace, which, is to keep the foul from the corruption of fin. Moreover, to make room for the Spirit of God, to come and take possession of the foul, and to fix his dwelling there. the devil is cast out by solemn exorcisms; exsufflations, and prayers; and the fenses of the foul are opened as. it were to God, by the application of the spittle to the ears and nostrils, with the Ephphetha pronounced in imitation of our Lord, Mark. vii. 34. O how great

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Confider 2dly, that, after this, follows the folemn renunciation of Satan, and of all his works, and of all his pomps; as a declaration of an eternal war against this mortal enemy: and then to give us to understand what kind of arms we are to furnish ourselves with for this warfare, we are anointed with confecrated oil on the breast, and between the shoulders, to fignify by this outward unction, the inward unction of the Holy Ghoft, and of his fortifying grace; here given to strengthen our breasts with heavenly charity, to love, and to keep the divine commandments; and to give force to our shoulders, to take up our cross; and to bear, in a Christian manner, all the labours, difficulties, and advertities of this mortal pilgrimage. To which is added, immediately after baptism, another unction, on the top of the head, with the holy Chrism; to fignify our being by baptism incorporated in Christ, the great anointed of the Lord, and being folemnly confecrated to God for ever, by the unction of his grace; as all fuch things, as are anointed with the holy Chrism, are by the church dedicated to God forever. Hence all Christians are called by St. Peter a kingly priesthood, from partaking in the dignity of Christ, and being anointed through him with that holy unction, with which God has of old anointed his priefts, prophets, kings, and mar-

Consider 3dly, that, immediately after baptism, we are also cloathed with a white linnen garment, which the minister of God gives us with these words: Receive this white garment, which thou shalt carry without spot or stain, before the judgment seat of our Lord Jesus Christ, that thou mayst have eternal life: Amen. And then, in allusion to the parable of the virgins, that went forth, with their lamps, to meet the bridegroom, St. Matt. xxvi: and of the servants, that with their lights in their hands, were ever ready to open the door to their Lord, St. Luke xii, we receive a lighted taper in our hand with these words: Receive this burn-

ing light: and keep thy baptifus, fo as to be suithout re. proof. Keep the commandments of God, that when the Lord shall come to his nuptials, thou mayst meet him, together with all the Saints, in the beavenly court, and mayst live with bim, for ever and ever, Amen. Which ceremonies put us in mind of the strict obligation of leading a holy and innocent life, after baptism: of holding forth the light of faith in our lamps, to the edification of all men; and keeping them ever burning with the oil of charity and good works, till we meet our Lord in his heavenly kingdom.

Conclude, from the confideration of all these mysterious ceremonies used in baptism, to settle in thy soul a great idea both of the dignity, and of the obligations of a Christian: and to make it the business of thy life to correspond both with the one, and the other. But O take care, above all things, not to frain that

robe of innocence by wilful fin!

### Wednesday after Low-Sunday.

On the evil of falling from the grace of baptism.

CONSIDER first, that how much the greater the dignity is, to which we are raised in baptism; and how much the more excellent the advantages are which we there receive; together with the inestimable treafures of baptifinal innocence, grace, and fanctity; fo much the more difmal is that fall, by which we forfeit, and lose in a moment, all that dignity, with all those advantages, and treasures. A dreadful fall indeed! by which the poor foul falls from heaven to hell, from God to the devil; from being a child of God, to be a flave of Satan, and of fin, that is worse than Satan; from being the spouse of Christ, to be the pro-Stitute of unclean spirits; from being the temple of the Holy Ghost, to be the habitation of the wicked This abominable tyrant, in the very moment the fins, enters in, and takes possession of her; he robs her at once of all her treasures, of virtue, grace, and

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merit, of all her thare in Jesus Christ, of all her right and title to his kingdom, and of all true peace and joy; and, in exchange for all these good things, he offers her nothing but husks of swine, which cannot satisfy her appetite; nothing but mere toys, and sooleries; poisonous baits which delude her with a momentary sweetness, presently sollowed with a bitter remorse, and a long train of other evils ending in death and hell.

Confider 2dly, the folly and madness of the foul that confents to fuch an exchange. Alas! She exchanges all her good at prefent, and all her title to any good hereafter, either in time, or eternity, for a mere bubble, a brutish passion, an irksome slavery, an eternal mifery! Ah! unhappy finner, open thy eyes, and fee the wretched bargain thou hast made! See how strangely thou hast been deluded; to part with thy God, and all thy good, for fomething so base, so vile. fo empty, fo filthy, fo fhort, fo foolish, and miferable; accompanied with fo much remorfe, with fo much danger, and with fo much falsehood and deceit. Before thy fin, heaven was thine; God himfelf was thine; but now thou hast parted with thy God; thou haft fold him for a mere nothing; thou art no longer his; thou haft made him thy enemy: Thou haft exchanged heaven for hell; thou standest upon the very brink of a miserable eternity, thou art just ready to fall down that dreadful precipice. Can any folly or madness bear the least comparison with this?

Consider 3dly, the enormity of the treason which the soul is guilty of, when she falls from the grace of baptism. She renounces, her allegiance to her king and God: she rebels against him to follow Satan: she even drives him from his throne, which he held within her; she expells him out of his temple, to make room for his enemy. She sets up an idol in the house of God, which she worships in contempt of the living God. She violates all her solemn vows; she facrile giously profanes the temple consecrated to God; she breaks his holy covenant; she treads under soot the precious blood of his Son; and, as much as lies in her, she crucisses

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him again. O my foul, hast thou had no share in all this guilt? Alas! how early didft thou fall from thy baptismal grace, into the bottomless pit of sin, and misery! How quickly didst thou exchange thy God for Satan! Thou wast strictly bound, in consequence of thy creation, thy redemption, thy baptismal dedication, and the covenant then made in thy name, to turn thyself to God, as soon as thou wast capable of knowing him, and to confecrate thy whole felf to his love and service for evermore: and instead of this, haft thou not, at thy very first coming to the use of reafon, like the rebel angels, turned away from thy God, by running after empty toys, and lying follies preferably to him, and thinking but little or nothing of him?

Conclude, if thy conscience charge thee with this guilt, to bewail for the whole remainder of thy life, the loss thou hast sustained, the misery thou hast incurred, the folly and madness, the heinousness, and enormity of this thy fall from God. And, in order to make amends, after the best manner thou art capable of, endeavour now at least, and for every day and hour, thou hast yet to come, to make a frequent offering of thy whole felf, without referve, to the love and fervice of the divine majesty.

#### Thursday after Low-Sunday.

On the theological virtues.

ONSIDER first, that, as God is the sovereign fpirit, and the fovereign truth, fo they that would offer him an acceptable homage must worship him in Spirit, and truth: John iv. 24. by joining with the external adoration, praise, prayer and sacrifice, which is offered him in the Church of Christ, the internal homage of their heart; and the pure worship of the three divine virtues or faith, hope, and love. Where these are duly exercised, all is well: there God is, and all good: but where any one of these is wanting, all goes ple

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wrong; nothing elfe can supply that deseat. Emplorace then. O my soul, these through brace then, O'my foul, these three virtues, with thy whole heart and affection; and they will bring thee to thy God. There is no other way to heaven and a

happy eternity, but by faith, hope, and charity. It is Confider 2dly, that these three virtues are called theological and divine, from the immediate relation they have to God. They flow from him into our fouls; and they take our fouls along with them to him. They tend to him as the fovereign object, with which they are taken up, and upon which they are wholly employed; and they are entirely grounded on him, and on his divine attributes, as their fole motive and foundation. Thus faith believes in him, as the fovereign truth, and obliges the foul to bow down, and to adore him as fuch; and to give an undoubted affent, to all the truths re vealed by him, because he is the sovereign truth, who neither can deceive, nor be deceived. Thus hope puts her whole trust in him; worships him as the inexhaultible fource of all good: and raifes the foul to a lively expectation of mercy, grace, and falvation from him; grounding herfelf upon his almighty power, goodness, promises, and mercy, and Thus charity, or dithe precious blood of his Son. vine love, embraces him above all things, worships him, by offering herfelf and all things elfe to him; loves him for his own infinite goodness sake, and all others, that are made after his image and likeness, for 1111 his fake. Thus these three virtues derive their excellence, which they have above all others, from this immediate relation to the fource of all excellence. Of my foul, fee thou give them the first place in thy inald: ward house, and continually entertain them there. in Make them thy favourites; and they will make thee -15 ed the favourite of heaven. of

Confider 3dly, that, to entertain these divine virtues in the soul, we must make frequent acts of them: otherwise they will quickly fade away and die. The foul that does not often exercise her faith, by eman ploying her thoughts upon the great truths of God MADYWI. and

and eternity, quickly forgets both God and herfelf: and, by forgetting God and herfelf, is exposed to all manner of evils. In like manner, where hope is not frequently exercised, by the help of prayer and confideration, it quickly degenerates into prelumption. And as for charity, or love, which is in the nature of a fire, that is always active, it must needs die away, if it be not maintained, and kept alive, by frequent exercice. As the just man lives by faith, according to the Scripture; so he must also live by hope, and by charity: so that the whole life of a Christian ought to be continually influenced by these three virtues: which can not be, without frequent acts of all the three. And this is the shortest and easiest way to all perfection.

Conclude to labour to acquire, and to entertain, these divine virtues, by frequent acts of them; and in order thereunto to be diligent in the daily exercice of mental prayer. In this school they are best learnt, im-

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proved, and brought to perfection. ways on near it had

# Friday after Low-Sunday, min on faith. On faith.

ONSIDER first, that without faith it is impoffible to pleafe God, Hebr. xi. 6. This virtue is the ground-work and first foundation of all our good: Here we must begin the work of our falvation. But what is faith? Not, as some vainly imagine, a presumptuous confidence of the remission of our fins, and of our justification, and eternal beatitude; excluding that humble fear, with which the Christian is taught to work out his falvation, Philip: ii. 12, Rom kin20. But a firm belief of all those things that God has any ways revealed or promifed; a close adhesion of the foul to all the divine truths, as coming from the eternal truth: a firm affent; a bowing down of the foul to all that God has taught, how much foever above our comprehension, or understanding. Faith, says the Apostle, Hibr. xi. 1, is the fubstance (that is, the strong foundation)

dation) of things to be boped for: the evidence of things that are not feen. These good things we hope for; these truths unseen, are made as it were visible to the foul by faith; the embraces them; the adheres to them, with a strong and undoubted assent; the casts down all proud thoughts and imaginations that raile them? selves up against these truths of God; and the directs the whole conduct of her life according to this head venly rule. This is that divine virtue of faith, to which the apostle gives those great encomiums, Hebr. xi. This was it that brought forth fo many wonderful fruits in the ancient Saints; and made them the friends and favourites of God.

Confider adly, that the merit of faith, which makes it so acceptable to God, consists in this, that it pulls down the pride of man, by captivating his understanding; and obliging it to believe what it cannot fee; to adore what it cannot conceive; and to submit to truths that it can no ways reach to. Man fell originally from God, by a proud affectation of a superiour and more excellent knowledge than God was pleased to allow him, and which might make him like to God, Gen. iii. 5. And therefore it has pleased his divine majesty, that the first and most essential step for man to arise from fin, and to return to him, should be the humble attent of divine faith, which makes a facrifice of what is most dear to our pride, that is, of the liberty, we are so fond of, of thinking as we please, in all matters, without restraint or controul; and casts down all the powers of the foul, to worship in the dark truths, generally speaking, most incomprehensible to the understanding, most shocking to the will, and most humbling to the whole man.

Consider 3dly, that the faith which God requires of us. and without which we can neither please him here, nor be happy with himhereafter, must be catholic, that is, it must be universal: it must extend itself to all revealed truths without exception. For asthey all equally come from God. by divine revelation; and are all built upon the fame foundation; are all recommended to our belief by the foundation

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Tame authority of the church of God; and all supported by those strong testimonies and evidences, by which the Scripture and Christianity itself are supported! it would be calling in question the divine veracity, to dispute the truth of any one article duly proposed by the church; it would be, in effect, the utter loss of all divine faith: because it would be believing by humour, and not by divine authority. Here we may say with St. James, chap. ii. 10. He that offends in one point, becomes guilty of all: because he is a rebel against that truth, by which they are all delivered. O! never suffer us, dear Lord, to be rebels to thy divine truth; or proudly to oppose our petty reasonings against any part of thy word, or the authority established by thee!

Conclude to lay this strong foundation of faith, if thou hopest to raise a spiritual building within thee, in which God may choose to dwell; and which may entitle thee to an everlasting dwelling with God. To build upon any other foundation is to build upon sand.

#### Saturday after Low-Sunday.

#### On the grounds of faith.

CONSIDER first, that divine faith is grounded always upon God's infallible truth: inafmuch as every affent of divine faith is given by the foul upon the motive of divine revelation: the believes all these truths because God has taught them, who is the truth itself, and who cannot deceive, nor be deceived. Whofoever believes upon any other motive, and not upon the testimony of God, may have an obinion indeed of heavenly truths, or a human faith concerning them; but falls short of divine faith; which wholly builds tifelf upon God's truth. And therefore, divine faith carries with it a greater and higher degree of certainty, than any human sciences whatsoever: because nothing can be so certain, as that truth itself cannot lie; and that what God has taught must needs be true. See then, my foul, what kind of affent God expects thou frouldit yield yield to all the truths he has revealed: he expects thou shouldst bow thyself down to them, earnestly embrace them, and firmly adhere to them, as most certain and divine.

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Consider 2dly, that though the only proper motive upon which a Christian believes, with divine faith, the truths of religion, be divine revelation, or the word and testimony of God, either contained in the Scriptures, or conveyed down by tradition: yet, as this testimony, or revelation, first delivered to the Saints, must come to us recommended by fuch evidences as may be fufficient to convince us that God has spoken indeed, and has revealed these truths; and does require our assent to them as divine; therefore this fovereign truth has been pleased to set such marks upon all the truths that come from him, and has flamped them in such manner with his broad feal, as may fully fatisfy all fincere feekers and lovers of truth, of their coming indeed from his divine majesty: so that it would be highly unreasonable for them not to yield to them that affent of faith, which is due to divine truths. Of this nature are all the prophecies, and miracles, and other arguments of credibility, upon which the Christian religion is grounded; together with the innumerable tokens of divine favour, which recommend to us that illustrious fociety of the catholic church of Christ, which bears testimony to the divinity of all thefe truths.

Confider 3dly, by descending to particulars, some of the many strong and weighty arguments and motives, that give force to the testimony and authority of this church of Christ, considered as an illustrious society, bearing witness to those truths which she delivers, as having received them from God himself. This great and most ancient society is, and has been for 1700 years, spread far and near through all the world: she was foreshewn and foretold long before, by many plain and glorious prophecies: she was established by Christ and his apostles, by signs and wonders, and innumerable miracles, the gift of tongues, and other gifts of the Spirit of God: she was miraculously propagated in

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a short time, throughout the world; in spite of all the opposition of the whole earth and hell: she has been maintained ever fince by the blood of millions of martyrs; and by the faintly and miraculous lives of millions of other servants of God, in all ages, and in all nations: the has been embraced and followed by all the best and wifest of men; and defended by the most godly and learned: she has, in fine, all this time, held forth the light of God to the whole world, by her constantly and fervently preaching all holiness; by the purity and fanctity of her doctrine; and by the efficacy of it, in the conversion of innumerable sinners; in the withdrawing thousands of all conditions from the broad way of the world, to a recluse and penitential life; and in inspiring thousands of her children with a defire of wholly dedicating themselves to divine love: fo that she has, at all times, and in all places, produced many eminent Saints, whose whole lives have been standing miracles of divine grace, and flanding testimonies of the truth of that faith and church which they all professed. These, and many other arguments and motives of credibility, loudly proclaim to all mankind, that the hand of God, and his truth is, and always has been, with this illustrious fociety of the church of Christ: and that the is entirely to be credited in the testimony she bears to the divine revelation of all that the propofes as matters of faith.

Conclude with giving thanks to the goodness and allwife providence of the Almighty, who has not only revealed to his church his heavenly truths, for the healing our fouls from all their maladies, and bringing them to the very fountain of health and life, which is with him; but also has given that illustrious authority to her, whom he has made the guardian and depositary of his truths, that, if we are fincere in feeking, we cannot well fail of finding both her, and them. But then remember, that the faith of divine truths, how infallible foever, will never bring thee to God, except it be a living faith that works by charity, in Jesus Christ, Gal. v. 650A

believe there is a God, and an eternity? non

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#### Second Sunday after Easter. on a lively faith. The street of the street of the

ONSIDER first, that the faith, to which the word of God gives fuch high encomiums, and to which it attributes all the great things that have been done by the ancient Saints, is not a dead faith, like that of the devils, or of those wretched souls, that are spiritually poffested by the devils, and who have little or no fense of divine truths;) but a lively and active faith, that penetrates into the invisible things of God, and makes them? familiar to the foul; that fets them continually before her eyes, in their proper light; and gives them a constant influence over every step that is to be taken in her mortal pilgrimage. Such a faith as this is the fource of all good to the foul: it keeps her in the remembrance and presence of God: it teaches her to watch diligently, and to pray fervently; it encourages her to hope and to love; it gives her a horrour for fin; it compleatly arms her against all her spiritual enemies, with a shield that is proof against all their fiery darts; with the believt of falvation, and with the fword of the spirit, (which is the word and truths of God) which puts to flight all the legions of hell, when employed against them, by a lively belief. But where this lively faith is wanting, all goes to wreck, and to ruin. Lord, do thou encrease our faith, and make it lively : O grant us this true heavenly wisdom, and all good things will come to us along with her: and fhe will effectually bring us to thee id down and white any transmit of the work the world

Confider 2dly, how true it is, that the want of a lively faith is the source of all the evils that over-run Christendom. Look into all conditions of Christians and fee how fin and Satan every where reign; and how few there are, in comparison, that dedicate themselves in good earnest to what should be their only business." And whence comes all this? Do not these men all believe there is a God, and an eternity? Do they not

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not all believe that they were made by this God, in order to a happy eternity? Do they not believe that there is a heaven and a hell? And that living in mortal fin is the broad road to hell? Do they not believe a judgment to come; and an all-feeing eye ever upon them; and that is, one day, to decide their cause, according to their works, for life or death everlasting? Surely they believe all this, or they are not Christians. But the misfortune is, that their faith of all these, and such like Christian truths, is lulled asleep, or rather 'tis quite dead: it has no influence on their lives: it puts little or no restraint upon their passions and lusts. So that, in reality, 'tis the want of a lively faith, that fills the Christian world with all forts of crimes, and that

continually crowds hell with fouls.

Consider 3dly, that the Christian must come at this lively faith, by defiring, feeking, and heartily praying for it. But the most effectual means for arriving at it, is by ferious confiderations and daily meditations. The great Christian truths relating to God and eternity, are very moving, when they are duly weighed and confidered: but they make little or no impression upon worldlings, who live in a perpetual forgetfulness of To bring forth a lively faith in the foul, they must take deep root there. But how shall they take deep root, if they are not suffered to fink deep into the foul by confideration? Hence the great difference bet veen the good and the bad Christian, the Saint and the finner, is, that the one thinks, and the other does not think: the one keeps his faith alive by frequently meditating on divine truths; the other's faith is dead, and his whole foul is laid waste, with utter desolation, because he seldom or never thinks in his heart.

Conclude to labour for the acquiring and maintaining this lively faith, by praying well, and living well; but more especially by thinking well: for, without this, thou wilt have little or no sense of God in thy prayer,

and little or no fign of God in thy life.

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# Monday after the second Sunday.

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entigenensited come a land and their everence ever whom ONSIDER first, that hope is also a theological, or divine virtue, and is no less necessary than faith to our eternal falvation. As by faith we believe in God, to by hope we put our whole trust in him. Faith builds itielf upon God's truth: hope builds itself upon his power, goodness, promises, and mercy. Faith believes all he teaches, as coming from the fovereign truth, that cannot deceive, nor be deceived. Hope looks for all good from him, as the inexhausted source of all good, with an affured confidence, that he will not fail, on his part, of flewing mercy, giving grace, and imparting falvation to us, thro' Jefus Christ; if we fail not, on our part, of applying to him in a proper manner, and performing the conditions he requires of us. This divine virtue produces many excellent fruits; it comforts the foul under all the afflictions of this life; it supports her under all her labours; it encourages her to go on with vigour in her mortal pilgrimage; it railes her above this miferable world, and all its toys, and fixes her heart in heaven. 'Tis stiled by the Apostle, Hebr. VI. 19. The anchor of the foul, fure and firm (not fastened in the earth, but in heaven) entering in, even within the veil, to the true fanctuary, where our high priest Jesus Christ is entered for us; and there fixed in God himfelf. O happy anchor, which keeps our fouls ever fteady in the midft of all the fforms we are liable to, in this buifterous fea of the world; and by the help of which they are raifed up to God!

Confider 2dly, that divine hope keeps the golden mean between the two extreams, of despair on the one hand, and presumption on the other; both of them reckoned amongst the sins against the Holy Ghost; because of their obstructing, in a particular manner, all the motions and graces of this divine Spirit: Despair, by wholly giving up the cause of God, and the soul;

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and prefumption, by rathly expecting falvation, without complying with the necessary conditions, or using the means for it. Despair shuts out the Holy Ghost, by wilfully shutting up the gate of prayer, and excluding all other means of grace: and prefumption, by fetting up a way to heaven opposite to his divine appointments; and in which his grace will have no share. See, my foul, thou fly these two rocks, both of them infinitely injurious to thy God, and destructive of divine hope. Never give thyfelf up to despondence, or despair; seeing thou hast so good a God; so rich in mercies towards all that call upon him; who has redeemed thee with the precious blood of his own Son; and who has promifed all good, through him, to all fuch as properly apply for it. But then beware also of the opposite extream, of presuming upon what he has not promised, or expecting to come to him, by walking in a way, that leads from him.

Consider 3dly, that divine hope, as well as faith, ferves very much for the arming the foul for her foiritual warfare, and for the overthrowing of all her enemies: because by the means of this virtue, we are Arengthened in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Eph. vi. 10, we exchange our own weakness, for his almighty strength and power: and having our God with us, and for us, we run to the combat fet before us with vigour and courage, and fight our way to heaven; in spite not only of slesh and blood; but of all the legions of hell. Yes, my foul, put thy whole trust in God, and thou wilt ever be victorious in all thy conflicts: He never forfakes them that put their whole trust in him. Divine hope never confoundeth. the belmet of Jalvation, which protects our head against the enemy; by covering it, as it were, with the Divinity itself; whose divine word and honour is engaged to stand by, and defend all such as put their trust in him

Conclude ever to pray and labour for this divine virtue of hope, the fweet companion of thy plight-

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mage, and safeguard in all dangers. She will teach thee to keep close to God; and will engage him to keep close to thee.

#### Tuesday after the second Sunday.

Cn joining a distrust in ourselves with considence in God.

CONSIDER first, that in order to succeed in the spiritual warfare, an entire distrust in ourselves must go hand in hand with our confidence in God. For if we build, in the least, upon our own strength, we build upon a fandy bottom; and our house will certainly fall, at the first shock of trial or temptation. The wifeman builds his house upon a rock: (St. Matthew vii. 24.) and it is proof against all storms and sloods: But the foolish man builds his house upon the fand without a foundation; and when the rains fall, and the floods rife, and the winds blow, and beat against that house, it presently falls: and great is the fail thereof. He that entirely trusts in God, and not in himself. is a wife man, and builds upon a rock, which can never fail him. But he that puts the least confidence in himself, is a foolish man; because the bottom he builds upon is mere fand, that cannot support the least weight. Curfed is the man, faith the prophet, (ferem. xvii. 5.) that truffeth in man, and whose heart departeth from the Lord: which curse falls upon all such as trust in the strength of their own resolutions; or in any power, or ability of their own. They perfectly drive away from them the grace of God, by their pride and prefumption.

Consider 2dly, that as God's honour is engaged to stand by them, that put their whole trust in him, and to affist them with his most powerful and effectual graces: so, he is, in a manner, obliged to oppose and resist all such facrilegious wretches as would rob him of his glory, by ascribing any good to themselves;

or expecting any good from themselves; or from their own strength. And are not all they guilty of this facrilegious presumption, who in their undertakings or refolutions, build upon themselves, instead of building upon God; or, at least, divide their confidence between themselves and God; and so would make themselves partners at least in his glory? See, my foul, thou never be guilty of any fuch extravagance and madness, For what greater madness can there be, than for mere weakness and nothing, a miserable finful nothing, to prefume of itself, and of its own strength! what greater extravagance than for man to put himfelf in the place of God; or to attribute to himself what can only be the work of God! Good God, deliver us from any

fuch extravagant madness!

Confider 3dly, that one of the principal reasons, why many Christians, that otherwise seem to be men of good will, make little or no progress in the way of God; and why numbers of others, after repeated confessions, and (as they imagine) strong purposes of renouncing their finful habits; still return, like dogs to the vomit, by relapfing into the fame fins; and too often dye in their fins; is because they trust too much to themselves, and to their own resolutions; and are not fufficiently divested of all felf-confidence. Alas! this evil, is a mortal poison, which is apt to creep in imperceptibly, and to lie lurking in the midft of the foul; and to corrupt its very vitals. It makes it barren, with regard to the bringing forth any true fruit to God, either in itself, or in others; and fruitful, in nothing but in weeds, that are only fit for the fire. My foul, examine well thyfelf, and fee if this unhappy felf-confidence have no share in thy enterprizes? Are thy resolutions wholly built upon Gods grace; to be fued for, and obtained, by humble prayer? Art thou practically and fenfibly convinced, of thy own nothing, mifery and finfulness; and that thou canst not make one step towards God, but inasmuch as he shall help thee? Does no fecret opinion of the strength of thy refolutions make thee rashly expose thyself to temptation?

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O remember thou hast not half that virtue and love of God, which St. Peter had! and yet, alas! a secret confidence in his own resolutions, betrayed him into that grievous crime of denying his Lord.

Conclude so to hope for all good from God; as to be ever mistrustful of thyself: and therefore, as the apostle admonishes, to work out thy salvation with sear, and

rembling, Philip. ii. 12.

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#### Wednesday after the second Sunday.

On the Lord's prayer.

ONSIDER first, that divine hope cannot lie idle in the foul; nor fuffer her to be idle; but exercises the soul in prayer; as the great means of obaining all the good fhe hopes for. Now all the good hat we are to hope and pray for, is marked out to us by our Lord; and comprized in a very few words, in that excellent prayer, which he has taught us, commonly called, The Lords prayer. Here, in seven short peitions, we pray for all that we are any ways authorized by the word of God to hope for, for our felves, or for our neighbours; for body, or foul; for time or eternity. Here we are taught to make acts of all the nost necessary virtues, of faith, hope, love of God, conormity to his bleffed will, charity for our neighbours. orgiveness of injuries, and repentance for our fine. Here we daily make a spiritual communion, by apiring after the bread of life. O the excellence of his heavenly prayer: fo short in words, that the neanest capacity may easily learn it: and so copious n its contents, that they might fill whole volumes! And what a pity that the generality of Christians, hould run over this admirable prayer, with fo little enfe of what they are faying; and with dispositions foppofite to the import of those facred petitions!

Consider 2dly, that, in the beginning of this divine rayer, we call God our Father: and we are authorized call him so by the Son of God himself. Stand assorbed. I.

my foul, at this high favour: what greater dignity can any creature be raised to, than to be called, and to be a child of God; to have him for our Father, who made heaven and earth; and who fills heaven and earth with his infinite majesty? O my foul, see thou never degenerate from this dignity of a child of God, by behaving thyself unworthily of such a Father. See thou never more make thyfelf a flave to fin, or Satan: O child of heaven, lie no longer groveling in the mire of the earth. In this prayer we are taught to address ourselves to our Father, who is in beaven: to the end, that we may reflect whither we are to direct our thoughts, when we pray: and that we may not suffer any attach to the things of the earth, by love and affections, to hinder them from freely flying up to heaven. My foul, where are thy thoughts in the time of prayer? Do no irregular affections chain them down to the earth, when they ought to be in heaven?

Consider 3dly, what encouragement it ought to be to a Christian, when he goes to his prayers, to remember that he is presenting his petitions to his Father; and to such a Father; who has an incomparable love for his children; who encourages them to ask; who teaches them, in this excellent prayer, what they are to ask for; who has frequently promised to grant them what they ask, provided it be good for them; and whose power, riches, bounty, and mercy, are all equally infinite. O! let this title of our Father, which we give to God, in the Lord's prayer, raise our hopes in him; let it instame our hearts with love for so amiable a Father; let it bespeak a reverential awe, a filial sear of offending such a parent; and an earnest desire of being ever a dutiful and obedient child.

Conclude ever to esteem and love this divine prayer; and daily to use it with a serious attention, and suitable

devotion.

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#### Thursday after the second Sunday.

On, Hallowed be thy name.

ONSIDER, that the first petition of the Lord's prayer is contained in these words: Hallowed be thy name: that is, may thy name be ever bleffed and praised, honoured and glorified. This petition claims the first place in the Lord's prayer, as its undoubted right: because the first and principal duty of a Christian, is to love his God, with his whole heart, and foul: and therefore, the first and principal thing he ought to defire and pray for, is the greater honour and glory of God. His love for his God makes him rejoice, to think that he is, in himfelf, infinitely happy and glorious; and will be fo for all eternity; and that he is, and will be eternally adored, praifed, and glorified by all his Angels and Saints. But then it grieves him to think, how little this infinite goodness is known, in this miserable world; how little this great object of his love, is loved here below; how little he is honoured, praised and glorified, by these very fouls of ours, made by him, and for him; and which can never be happy, but in the love and enjoyment of him. And therefore the intent of this petition is to remedy fo great an evil; by earnestly begging of the fovereign Good the source of all grace and good, that he would glorify his own most facred name in us, by effectually teaching us to love, serve, and glorify him.

Confider 2dly, that this petition contains an act of divine love, even of perfect charity and benevolence, in-asmuch as it expresses the longing desires of the soul for the greater honour, praise and glory of her maker, as the only good she can wish, or procure, to his infinite majesty. It contains also an act of the most perfect charity for herself; because, in praying that Gods name may be gloristed in all, and by all, she desires, in the first place, that it may be gloristed in herself, and by therself: now what greater good can she wish, or pro-

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cure for herself, than that God may be ever glorified in her, and by her; and that her whole being may be ever confecrated to his glory, for time and eternity? And as the most perfect act of charity for our neighbours, is that by which we labour to procure their greatest good; and the like good as we defire for ourselves; whilst by this petition, we dedicate our whole felves to the divine glory; we do as much for our neighbours also, by praying that God's name may be fanctified in them all, and by them all, both now, and for ever. And this love we here exercise, both with regard to ourfelves, and to our neighbours, is pure and perfect charity: because God is both the beginning and the end of it: inafmuch as we love both curfelves and ourneighbours, with relation to the greater glory of God. Thus divine charity, in all its branches, is exercised in this first petition.

Consider 3dly, that, in praying for the hallowing, or fanctifying, of the name of God, we pray, in effect, for the fanctification of the whole world: that the know-ledge of the true and living God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, may be spread over all the earth: that all nations may serve him; all tongues may praise him; and all hearts may love him: in a word, that all men upon earth may be Saints; and may be all happily united in publishing the glory of God's name; not merely by their words, but much more by their lives. For this is the most perfect way of sanctifying the name of God. See then, my soul, the vast extent of this petition, by which we pray for all glory to God; and for all good to man, both for here, and hereafter: and let

repeatest it.

Dille.

Conclude to let this earnest desire of the greater glory of God in all things, be ever the predominant passion of thy heart, and he will glorify thee for all eternity.

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# Friday after the second Sunday. Thy kingdom come.

CONSIDER first, that, in this fecond petition, we pray for the kingdom of God. Now we find in holy writ, that the kingdom of God is understood in three different ways. First, of the eternal kingdom of God in heaven. 2dly, of the spiritual kingdom of Christ, in his church, upon earth. 3dly, of the mystical kingdom of God, in our fouls, according to that of our Saviour (St. Luke xvii. 21.) The kingdom of God is within you. And in this petition, thy kingdom come, we pray for the kingdom of God, according to all these three acceptations of his kingdom. See, my foul, how ample, and extensive this petition is, and how noble and fublime those things are, which thou art here taught to petition for. Stand aftonished that a poor worm of the earth, extracted from nothing, and, which is infinitely more humbling, taken up from the dunghil of fin and corruption, should be authorized to aspire after a kingdom; even an eternal kingdom; to live and reign for endless ages, with the living God. Yet this we are here taught to pray for; with an affurance of being heard, if we pray as we ought, from him who has the disposing of this kingdom. And this is one part of the import of this petition: and contains anact of divinchope.

Consider 2dly, that as the kingdom of God is often taken in the scriptures to signify that spiritual kingdom, which Christ came to establish upon earth; and his reign in his church; in which he is both king, and priest, forever: so, in this petition, we are also to have an eye upon the propagation, and exaltation of this kingdom of Christ: by earnestly begging, that the reign of Satan, and of sin, may have an end; that all insidels may be enlightened by the light of the gospel: that all heresies, schissus, errors, and abuses, may be rooted out: that all vices, and scandals may be abolished amongst Christians: and that divine faith, hope,

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and

and charity, with all other virtues, may reign both in all the pastor's of God's church, and in all the people of God. So that here is also exercised an act of perfect love; both with relation to God, by desiring that his kingdom, his grace, and his truth, may be victorious, over all the world: and with relation to all mankind, by praying that all men may be subdued to that happy kingdom, and may be true and faithful subjects, to this

great king.

Consider 3dly, that, as true charity should begin at home, we are particularly to have in view, in this petition, the establishment of the kingdom of God in our own souls: by heartily desiring, and earnestly praying, that God may come to us, and take sull possession of our souls, by his grace; that he may set up his throne within us, and reign without controul, and without rival, in our hearts: that he may suppress all rebellions there, subdue all our passions, and make our whole interiour his own; by giving us a strong and perfect love for him. O blessed kingdom of divine love! When wilt thou come to me? When shalt thou be established in my soul? When shall thy facred slames consume in me all that is any ways displeasing to my God; or that dares to rebel against him?

Conclude to make it thy business to seek, in the first place, this kingdom of God, by procuring his justice in thy soul; and, as he has promised, nothing else shall be wanting to thee. God must first be king in thy soul here, if thou ever hope to arrive at his eternal

kingdom hereafter.

#### Saturday after the second Sunday.

Thy will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.

CONSIDER first, that, in this third petition, the soul embraces, with all her heart, the holy will of God; earnestly desiring and praying that both she herself, and every soul upon earth, may ever be, both a faithful servant, and a true lover of the divine will; even

as the Saints and Angels are in heaven; who are so absorpt in the love of God, that they have no other will, but the will of God. So that this petition, like the two former, contains an act of divine love. A love of benevolence, to God: inasmuch as the soul here desires to give all to God; and to bring both her own will, and all other wills, to him; that all may embrace, bow down, and adore, love, serve, and obey, the sacred will of God; and conform to it in all things. And a love of the most perfect charity to ourselves, and to our neighbours; in desiring and procuring for ourselves and them so great a good, as is this perfect conformity to the will of God; and that God's holy will may be ever done, both in us, and by us.

Consider 2dly, how just it is that we should ever adhere to the holy will of God, and pray with all our hearts, that his holy will may be done in all things. The will of God is always good, is always wife, is always right, and equitable, is always beautiful: and therefore we ought always to embrace it, and love it. He perfectly knows what is best; and what is best for us; and if we will leave ourselves in his hands, he will certainly order all things for the best: and therefore 'tis our wifeft way, if we love ourselves, to give ourselves up to his holy will. The will of God is all powerful, and must take place; and therefore 'tis a madness to set ourselves against his almighty will: it serves for nothing but to make us miserable. will of God, in effect, is God himself: and therefore we must ever submit, and obey it; we must always bow down and adore this facred will.

Consider 3dly, that the will of God ought to be the Christian's rule in all things. In all our deliberations, whether with regard to temporals or spirituals, we ought first to consult the holy will of God, crying out to him, with the convert St. Paul, Asts ix. 6. Lord what wilt thou have me to do? And this with a sincere desire to know, and a perfect readiness of mind to sollow his will, which ever way he is pleased to order, or direct: not seeking that his will should bend to ours, but that

durs may ever conform to his. And as, in all our dolings, we must, to the best of our knowledge and power, follow the will of God; so, in all our sufferings, we must resign and submit ourselves to his blessed will; assuring ourselves, that nothing happens to us in this kind, but by the appointment of heaven, and that all comes from the hand of him that knows what is best, because he is infinitely wise; and sends what is for the best, because he is infinitely good, and good to us.

Conclude ever to recite this third petition of the Lord's prayer, with these dispositions of the love of God and of his holy will; and of a perfect conformity in all things to his holy will. We read of a servant of God [Gregory Lopez] that for some years, at every breath, repeated this petition, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. O that we could always be in the like hap-

py fentiments!

#### Third Sunday after Easter.

Give us this day our daily bread.

CONSIDER first, that, after seeking in the three first petitions, the greater glory of the name of God, the propagation of his kingdom, and the execution of his will, both in heaven and in earth; we are taught, in the fourth petition, to pray for all necessaries for ourselves, both for soul, and body; under the name of our daily bread; which we here beg for this short day of our mortal life, in order to support us, in our pilgrimage, through the wilderness of this world, till we come to our true country; and to the happy day of everlasting light, and life, in the heavenly kingdom of our Father. As to the things of this world; we pray for them, with more indifference, as for things of lesser consequence; and which, if we feek first the kingdom of God and his justice, our Father has promifed to furnish us with, viz. as far as he shall fee expedient for us : and we pray for them, for to day, being forbidden to be follicitous for them,

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for to morrow. But what we are here more earnestly to pray for, is, the bread which is to support the spiritual life of our souls; viz. the grace of God, the word of God, and the holy sacraments. And this we beg both for ourselves, and for all the world, from the

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Confider 2dly, that the holy fathers expound this petition, as meant in particular, of the bread of life, which we receive in the bleffed eucharift, for the food, nourishment, strength, and life of our souls. This bread is the facred body, and blood, of Jesus Christ, the Son of God: Who calls himself the living bread which came down from heaven, St. John vi. 51, and affures us, that he that eateth of this bread shall live forever: and that the bread which he will give is his flesh, for the life of the world, v. 52. This is here stiled our daily bread; because given us, for this our day of life; and given to be our daily support; by our partaking of it, either really, or spiritually, every day. O! my foul, ever aspire after this heavenly bread, the fource of all grace, and true life. Admire and adore the incomprehensible ways, by which thy God feeks to communicate himself to thee; and see thou correfpond with his goodness, and love, by running daily to him, and giving thy whole felf to him.

Consider 3dly, that the best way to answer the principal intent of this petition, is by making a spiritual communion (as often as we repeat those words, give us this day our daily bread) by a lively faith, and hope in Jesus Christ, the true bread of life; by assigning after him, by love, and desire; and by inviting him to come, and to take full possession of our souls; and to unite them to himself, for time and eternity. Happy those souls that frequently in the day commu-

nicate in this manner!

Conclude to pray for thy daily bread in such manner as to have ever principally in view this bread of life; and to labour to partake of it daily; at least, by a

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ours may ever conform to his. And as, in all our doings, we must, to the best of our knowledge and power, follow the will of God; so, in all our sufferings, we must resign and submit ourselves to his blessed will; assuring ourselves, that nothing happens to us in this kind, but by the appointment of heaven, and that all comes from the hand of him that knows what is best, because he is infinitely wise; and sends what is for the best, because he is infinitely good, and good to us.

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nicate in this manner!

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spiritual communion.

### Monday after the third Sunday.

Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.

CONSIDER first, that, in this fifth petition, our Lord has furnished us with a daily remedy for those many evils into which we daily fall. We all offend in many things, James iii. 2. and not a day passes, in which we are not contracting fresh debts to our great master; either by omission, or commission, in thought, word, or deed. Therefore we ought daily to fue for a discharge, and to call for mercy and forgiveness, with a truly penitent heart; and this is the defign of this petition of the Lord's prayer: which, when recited with fervour, readily obtains the remission of these daily debts, and reinstates us in the good graces of our master. These lesser faults, into which we daily fall, if neglected, and fuffered to grow, and multiply upon us, are of worse consequence to our souls than we can well imagine: the water that comes into the ship by small chinks, if not daily pumped out, may, in time, encrease in fuch manner as to fink the vessel. That the like may never happen to our fouls, we must be daily repenting for these daily sins; and offering up daily for them the facrifice of a contrite and humble heart, as often as we repeat this petition of the Lord's prayer.

Consider 2dly, that, besides the obligation of daily labouring to procure the discharge of these daily debts, we must see if we have not reason to apprehend a more heavy load of debt, lying upon our fouls, on account of our past fins; more especially if, in any part of our life, we have lived in mortal fin. Alas! the load of fuch debts as these is immense, a sum of ten thousand talents, which we are utterly unable to discharge of ourselves; and whether our repentance has been sufficient to apply to our fouls the discharge purchased by the blood of Christ, we cannot tell. And, therefore, our best secu-

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rity is to be always repenting for our past sins; and to beg daily of God, to forgive us all the sins of our youth and our ignorances; to cleanse us from our hidden sins; and to be merciful to us, with regard to the sins we may have any ways occasioned in others. And with this penitential spirit, for all our past sins, known or unknown, we ought to recite this petition of the Lord's prayer; and, with it, daily present ourselves, like Magdalene, at the feet of our Redeemer, imploring his mer-

cy, both for ourselves, and for all poor sinners.

Confider 3dly, that, in this petition, we beg of God to forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. Which words were added by our Lord, to put us in mind, that we must not look for forgiveness from God of the offences we commit against him. if we don't forgive, from our hearts, the offences which our neighbours commit against us. See, Christians, how much our Lord takes to heart our forgiving one another, and loving our very enemies; fince, not content with frequently inculcating this duty on all other occasions, he was pleased to insert it in the very prayer he would have us daily to fay, to the end we might never forget it. Let us then examine well our dispositions in this regard; and lay afide all rancour and animosity against our neighbours, when we go to sue for mercy from God: otherwise we shall never obtain the mercy we ask.

Conclude to take occasion, from this petition of the Lord's prayer, to practise daily these three lessons: first, of a hearty repentance for thy daily sins: 2dly, of daily renewing thy forrow and contrition for thy past offences: and lastly, of daily exercising charity and mercy, in forgiving from thy heart, all that have offended

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Tuesday

### Tuesday after the third Sunday.

Lead us not into temptation.

ONSIDER first, that, after begging of our Lord, in the foregoing petition, the forgiveness of the sins we have already committed, we here beg of him to preferve us from relapfing into any of our former offences, or being ever any more guilty of wilful fin. The true penitent abhors the monfter fin, beyond all other evils whatfoever; and therefore he is not content with feeking the remission of all his offences, but is ever folicitous to avoid the like evils for the time to come: and therefore, he flies the occasions of them; seeks to keep out of all dangerous temptations; and being sensible of his own weakness, he is earnest in prayer, to beg of God to stand by him; and to help him to overcome all the enemies of his foul; and rather to let him die a thousand deaths, than to commit any one wilful fin. And this is the principal meaning of this petition, Lead us not into temptation : which ought to be recited by all Christians, with these dispositions of a great horrour of fin, and a most earnest desire to be ever preserved from it.

Consider 2dly, in what sense we here beg of God not to lead us into temptation; since, as St. James says, chap. i. 13. God is not a tempter of evils; and he tempteteth no man: viz. so as to incite, allure, or provoke to sin. No certainly: such temptations as these cannot be from God, who is essentially good, and ever abhors sin; but they are from the world, the slesh and the devil: yet as these never have power to tempt us, but with God's permission, nor strength to overcome us, but when we neglect to apply, in a proper manner, to God sor his grace; therefore, we make use of this expression, to signify our total dependance on God; and to beg athat he would not give the enemy any power over us, and to signify our strain of significant to significant to signify our strain dependance on God; and to beg athat he would not give the enemy any power over us, and so significant significant

of our virtue, and for the proof of our fidelity, are also in Scripture called temptations: such as afflictions, crosses, pains, &c; of which God is certainly the author and distributer: we beg of him, by these words, Lead us not into temptation, that, with relation to all such trials as these, he would ever have regard to our weakness, and

never lay upon us any load above our ftrength.

Consider 3dly, with regard to temptations, that they are no fins to us, if we give no way to them, nor bring them upon us by our own fault. So far from it, that they are often the occasions of very great good to our fouls; by obliging us to watch and to pray the more, from the fense of our danger; by keeping us humble; and by affording us the opportunity of gaining as many victories, and confequently as many glorious crowns for all eternity, as we have had conflicts with the enemy. by occasion of temptations. Wherefore it is not the meaning of this petition, to pray that we may never have any temptation, (for this might not be expedient for us) but that we may never yield to temptation. But as for the feeking, or defiring temptations, it would be too great a rashness to weak souls; and more especially with regard to temptations against purity, it would be a crime to affect them, or, without necessity, to expose one's self to them. Christians, let us learn to arm ourselves for this warfare with the armour of the fear of God, and a lively faith: let us fland upon our guard by watching and praying: let us readily and heartily relift the first attacks of the enemy: let us bear with patience and humility the labour and trouble of the conflict; but ever reject with horrour the criminal fatisfaction proposed by the enemy.

Conclude to observe these rules with regard to temptations; to join always an humble distrust in thyself, with a firm confidence in God; and ever to have recourse to him, in all thy conflicts, by humble and fervent prayer; and thou shalt always come off with vic-

tory.

#### Wednesday after the third Sunday.

#### Deliver us from evil.

ONSIDER first, that this petition is near akin to the two foregoing petitions; inafmuch as the main drift of the former of them was to deliver us from the evil of our past sins; and of the latter to keep us from the evil of fin, for the time to come; and this, in general, begs to be delivered from all evil, past, prefent, or to come. Now, of all these evils, sin is not only the greatest, but is, in some sense, the only thing that deserves to be called evil: because all other things, that we call evils, are either the consequences of fin, or cease to be real evils, when not accompanied with fin. So that the main business of this petition is to beg of God that he would deliver us from all fin, past, present, or to come; from all the confequences of fin, and the punishments which our fins have deserved; from the slavery of our passions and finful habits; and from the tyranny and possession of the evil one, who has the dominion over all wilful finners. Good God, for thy mercy fake, and through the precious blood of thy Son, our Redeemer, deliver us from all these dreadful evils!

Confider 2dly, by descending into particulars, all that scene of numberless evils, to which we are liable, on account of sin, in this miserable world; and from which we here pray to be delivered by the mercy of God: such as all publick calamities, wars, plagues, famines, earthquakes, tempests, inundations, &c. besides a multitude of private evils, to which each particular person is so frequently exposed. Then all spiritual evils, which are much more deplorable, whether public or private; heresses, schiss, persecutions of the church, errors, abuses, and the general reign of Satan and sin in the thoughts, words, and actions, of the children of this world. And, with regard to the suture, the dreadful evil of unprovided death, and final impenitence; the dismal suffer-

ings of another world; the judgment and sentence of eternal damnation; and the second death of a miserable eternity. And do not so many and such lamentable evils well deserve that we should continually pray, that God in his mercy would deliver us all from having

any share in them?

Confider 3dly, as to thyfelf in particular, how many and how great evils thou hast reason to apprehend, to be either actually upon thee, or to threaten thee on every fide. Reflect on the multitude of thy past and prefent fins, infinitely more numerous, and more enormous than thou imaginest; the uncertainty of the forgiveness of them; because of the uncertainty, the weakness, and inconstancy of thy repentance; the dreadful debt of punishment due to thy fins, and how little thou hast done towards the discharge of it; the vices and passions thou art daily subject to; the many enemies that encompass thee, and are continually laying snares for thy foul; the corruption of thy own heart, the blindness of thy understanding, thy weakness in all that is good, and the violence of thy concupiscence, and inclinations to evil. Then see what thou hast to apprehend of evil for the future, from the judgments of God, ever hanging over the head of impenitent finners; from the malice and fubtilty of thy enemies, ever intent upon thy ruin; and the hold thou givest them by thy passions, and that unhappy felf-love which keeps a continual correspondence with them; lastly, from that miserable death, judgment, and hell, which are the portion of all who, by occasion of mortal sin unrepented of, fall into the hands of the living God: and thou wilt be convinced of the necessity of thy continually crying out to thy only Redeemer: Deliver us from evil. Amen.

Conclude to embrace humble and fervent prayer, as the fovereign means to be delivered from all evils, past, present, or to come: and as these evils continually threaten thee, so let thy prayer also be in some measure

continual.

## Thursday after the third Sunday.

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ONSIDER first, that every fervant of God ought to begin the day with the worship of God, and to give his heart, as the wife man fays, Eccluf. xxxix. 6, to refort early to the Lord that made him; and to pour forth his prayer in the fight of the Most High. The manna of heaven melted away, and was loft, if the people of God did not get up before the fun to gather it: that it might be known to all men, fays Solomon, Wisdom, xvi. 28, that we must prevent the fun to bless God, and worship him at the dawning of the light. O God my God, fays the royal prophet, Pf. lxii. To thee do I watch at break of day. My foul, see thou never neglect this morning worthip of thy God. Let not the devil run away with thy first thoughts: but give them to God, by a pure and perfect offering of thy whole felf to his love and service, for that day, and for all eternity: and whilft thou art rifing and dreffing thyfelf, keep thyself in his company, and speak to him.

Confider 2dly, what are the particular acts of virtue and religion, that ought to be the ingredients of thy morning prayer, viz. 1. An act of adoration of the infinite majesty of God, and of homage to him; by bowing down both body and foul to worship him with all thy powers, as thy first beginning, and thy last end; and to acknowledge his absolute sovereignty, and thy total dependance on him. 2. An act of thanksgiving for all his benefits in general, and in particular, to thee and to all the world: for creation, preservation, redemption, vocation to the true faith, &c. as also for his eternal love, and, in consequence of this love, his bringing thee to the beginning of this new day, in order to bring thee forward to the happy day of eternity. 3. An act of contrition, for all thy past ingratitude, and for all thy fins, with a fincere resolution of renouncing them all for the future. 4. An offering of all thy thoughts, words, and actions of the

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every Day in the Year.

day, to the honour and glory of God; and of thy whole foul, to be employed in loving and ferving him. 5. An humble and fervent supplication, to beg the grace of God, and his bleffing, for thyself, and for the whole church: that he would keep all from fin; and teach all effectually to love him, and serve him for ever. 6. Conclude always with acts of faith, hope and charity and recommend thyself to the prayers and protection of the Blessed Virgin, of thy good Angel, and of all the

Angels, and glorified Saints.

Consider 3dly, that thou must also remember, in thy morning exercice, to declare war against thy customary failings and fins; but more especially against thy predominant passion, which is the most dangerous of all thy enemies. This is that daily warfare in which all, of necessity, must be engaged, who have a mind to fave. their fouls: we must all fight, and fight continually, against our vices and passions, or they will carry us to hell. Now this it is that obliges us to renew every morning our good resolutions; yet without trusting at all in ourselves: and to arm, and prepare ourselves beforehand for these conflicts, by forecasting the occasions and temptations we are like to meet with in the day and by concluding upon the measures proper to be taken, in order to overcome them, either by flight, or fight: but principally by fervent prayer to our Lord, to help us in the combat, and to grant us the victory.

Conclude to be ever diligent in this morning exercice. A good beginning of the day is a great matter. He will have the whole day, to whom thou givest

the beginning of it.

world force and preference to destruct in vocation to the true factor is a second force and, in confequence of the confequence of the confequence of the confequence of the confequence forward to the happy and the confequence of the confequen

An offering of all the throughts, words, and actions of

#### Friday after the third Sunday.

On evening prayer.

ONSIDER first, that, as God is our first beginning, forafmuch as we are made by him; fo is he also our last end, because we are made for him : and, therefore, as we ought to begin the day with him, by morning prayer; so we ought to end the day in his company, by evening prayer. Morning and evening prayer are like the two daily meals of the foul, that ought not, upon any account, to be omitted; left the foul should languish and grow fick, for want of her daily food: and if, upon any occasion, we are hindered from taking these meals, at their usual times, we ought to observe what we practise with regard to our bodily meals, that is, we must procure to take them afterwards, at the first opportunity. Moreover, as we make it our care, that our families, and fuch as are under our charge, should not want their daily corporal sustenance, fo we ought much more to make it our care, that their fouls may not starve, for want of our assembling themto prayer, or feeing that they are regular in this daily exercice.

Consider 2dly, that one of the principal businesses of the evening exercice, is the daily examination of confcience, which may be made in this manner: 1. Place thyself in the presence of God, bow thyself down, and adore him; and give him thanks for all he has done that day for thee, and for the whole world. 2. Earnestly beg his light and grace, that thou may it discover all thy fins, and be heartily forry for them. 3. Endeavour to call to mind how thou hast spent the day, from. morning till night; what care thou hast taken to difcharge thyfelf well, both of the common duties of aChriflian, and of the particular duties of thy station or calling: and especially how thou hast behaved thyself with regard to thy customary failings, and thy predominant passion. 4. Endeavour to be heartily forry for all the Samme fins: fins of the day, and for all the fins of thy whole life, known or unknown: go in spirit to the feet of Christ, to make an humble confession of them to him; and implore his mercy. 5. Resolve upon a serious and thorough amendment for the suture: determine to begin, from that very hour, a new life, and think upon the means of accomplishing it. Of how happy are those souls, that labour in this manner every night to wash away their fins with penitential tears; and that never venture to lie down to rest, under the guilt of sin! unhappy they who, for want of this precaution, expose themselves every night to the evident danger of dying in their sins, and even of finding themselves in hell before morning.

Consider 3dly, that, in order to end the day well, we ought every night to endeavour to put ourselves, as much as possible, in the condition in which we should be glad to be found at the hour of our death. And therefore, besides offering up to God, every night, the facrifice of a contrite and humble heart, for all the sins of our life; the Christian should also think seriously of his last end; and dispose himself for it, by acts of a lively faith; and of an entire confidence in his Redeemer; by a persect oblation and resignation of himself to the holy will of God; and by aspiring to an eternal union with him; and in the mean time, hiding himself, with great affection, in the sacred wounds of Jesus Christ; and there composing himself to rest. See, my foul, thou never forget this practice.

Conclude never to neglect any part of this evening exercice; and to see that it be not neglected by any under thy care. A religious performance of this duty will be a great means to secure to thy soul a happy death.

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morning the night; what case then half taken to difcharge the lift will, being of the condition dones of a Chrichars, and a tree party wheeleties of the that the name calling a find of the color the state half he has devicted with accepted to the color trace of a lings, and the checken mant

Saturday after the third Sunday.

On praying always. "" bis Leading

to mm, by appraison ONSIDER first, that we are not only to address ourselves to God by prayer, in the morning, and in the evening; but we are also called upon, in the word of God, to pray always, St. Luke xviii. I. To pray without ceafing, I Thef. v. 17, and to feek the face of the Lord evermore. Pf. civ. 4. The foul that truly loves her God, will never bear to flay all the day long, without often thinking of him, and fpeaking to him; feeing he has both his eye, and his heart, always uponher. Love ever feeks the company and conversation of its beloved: now 'tis by the means of prayer, that we are introduced into the company and conversation of our great lover; and we quickly lose both his love and him, if we pass whole days in the forgetfulness of him. Besides other dangers, that continually threaten us, when we do not run under the wings of God, and keep close to him, by continual prayer. So that if we love either God, or ourselves, we must frequently in the day have recourse to prayer. 'Tis the very breathing, and life of the foul; and therefore, to think to confine it to the morning, or evening only, is to expose the foul to the danger of perishing for want of breath. ... so was to say it blod sw

Consider 2dly, that the practice of this continual prayer, does not require that we should be always upon our knees, nor yet that we should always have a prayer-book in our hands, or be always reciting a form of prayer: nor does it any ways break in upon our other employments, so as to be any hindrance to them; no not even to our common conversation, or recreations: But it only consists in a certain sense and conviction of the presence of God, and in frequent conversions of the soul to him. Thus, for example, in the beginning of every action, the soul should turn to her God, (who is alway near her, and in the very

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midst of her) by offering up to his honour and glory what she is going to do; and, at the same time, offering her whole self to him: Thus, in the midst of all her actions, and conversations, she should frequently tend to him, by aspirations or breathings of love; and call him to her assistance, by short ejaculatory prayers. This way of proceeding will sanctify all her common performances, and make them all partake both of the

nature, and of the benefit of prayer.

Confider 3dly, how diligent the ancient patriarchs were in this exercice of praying always; fince the Scripture fays, they walked with God; and in his fight; which implies their ever thinking of him, and having a conflant attention to please him. The like was the practice of the fathers of the defart, and of fo many other. Saints, who, even whilft their hands were at work, took care to have their hearts on God. Christians, let us imi ate these servants of God: and since no time, nor place, nor company, nor occupation, can exclude the divine immenfity, which fills heaven and earth; nor hinder God, from being so near to us, that our very fouls are not more present to our bodies, which they animate, than God is to the very center of our fouls; let no time, nor place, nor company, nor occupation, divert us from often thinking of him, and often speaking to him, in our hearts. No conversation can be so honourable, fo profitable, or fo agreeable, as this which we hold in the closet of our fouls with our Sovereign Good.

Conclude to aim, with all thy power, at this inward conversation with God, in the midst of all thy external occupations. In order to this, keep thy mind pure from impertinent amusements, and roving imaginations; and thy heart from all disorderly ties and affections to creatures: and God will fill both thy mind and thy heart, and will effectually teach thee to pray always.

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On the great commandment of divine love.

CONSIDER first, those words of the divine law: quoted, Mark xii. 30. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with thy whole heart, and with thy whole Soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole Brength. This, fays our Lord, is the greatest, and the first commandment, Matt. xxii. 39. Yes, my foul, 'tis. the greatest of all the commandments of God, in his divine eyes; and that which he takes most of all to heart; fince he has made our fouls to his own image and likeness, to this very end, that we should love him, and should dedicate our whole being to his divine love, for all the time of our pilgrimage here upon earth; that so we might come to be happily united to him, in an eternal band of love, in his heavenly kingdom, O the excellent dignity of this divine commandment, which tends directly and immediately to raise our souls above this earth, and above the heavens of heavens, and the whole created universe, and to bring them to the God that made heaven and earth, and to unite them to him, by a most perfect love, both for time and eternity!

Consider 2dly, the incomprehensible goodness of God, manifested to us in this commandment; in his insisting so much upon our loving him; and upon our tending with all our power to a union with him. Is then our love of any consequence to him? Or can we add any thing to his happiness, by loving him? Or will he lose any thing, if we resuse him our love? And what is there in us, poor little ants, if compared to his infinite majesty, that he should concern himself whether we love him, or no? Would it not be an unspeakable savour to us, that he should even suffer us, considering who he is, and who we are, to aspire so high as to pretend to his love? But that this great God should make it a commandment, and the very first and

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principal of all his commandments, that we should I ove him, and love him with our whole heart; that he should infift upon our entering into this strict league of cternal friendship with him, promising all happiness for eternity upon our compliance, and threatening us with most dreadful and eternal evils, if we love him not: 'tis this that shews forth, and sets in fo wonderful a light, the goodness of our God, and his love for us: that we should be not only most wretched, insensible, and ungrateful beyond expression, but even, in some fense, worse than devils, if we should refuse him our love.

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Confider 3dly, the excellence of this commandment of divine love, with regard to the fruits it brings to our fouls. Divine love is the queen of virtues: she never comes alone; but brings all other virtues along with her: she gives life to them all: even faith, and hope, are dead, when she is not in their company. She brings with her the remission of all our fins : The makes us the friends and favourites of the Most High: the makes us his children, his spouses, his temples: she is the bond of all perfection. O my foul, how glorious it is, how happy, how delightful, to be thus united to thy God by a strict band of friendship, and love! O embrace then, with all thy powers, this great commandment; which, by obliging thee to give thy wholefelf up to the love of God, brings down thy God, with all his treasures, to thee!

Conclude to make it henceforward the business of thy life, to learn this great lesson of loving God: and as no one but God himself can effectually teach thee fo sublime, and so divine a science, continually beg of him to introduce thee into his school; which he holds in thy interiour; and there to be thy mafter.

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## Monday after the fourth Sunday.

On loving the Lord our God above all things.

ONSIDER first, the import of these words: Thou shall love the Lord thy God: and thou shall find in them innumerable motives to dedicate thyfelf to divine love: For who is this thou art here commanded to love? THE LORD: that is, the eternal, felf-existent, incomprehensible, and infinite being of beings, who alone properly is, and who is being itself. For all this is implied in that ineffable name, which is here rendered : THE LORD. I am, who am, faith he, Exod. iii. 14. And, He who is, hath fent me to you. THE LORD, that is, the Creator, and absolute mafter of the whole universe; of all things visible and invisible: infinitely powerful, infinitely wife, infinitely good, infinitely beautiful; the one true fovereign good: infinite in all perfections : goodness, beauty, perfection and truth itself: compared with whom all things ele are just nothing at all. See, my foul, how many motives thou hast to love this great Lord, who comprizes in himself all that is lovely and charming, who is the immense ocean of all good.

Consider 2dly, the motives of divine love implied in those words THY God; forasmuch as they signify that this Lord of infinite majesty is also pleased to be thine. Yes, he is thy God, he is thy first beginning, and thy last end: he is thy maker, who has made thee, for himself; and who many ways daily communicates himself to thee: he is thy father, thy spoule, thy pastor, thy keeper, thy constant benefactor, thy ever faithful friend, thy ancient and most disinterested lover: thy sovereign good, and the source of all thy good, for time, and eternity. And whereas thou wast fallen from him, and from his love, by sin, he has been pleased to give himself to thee, in a manner still more endearing, by sending his own Son to be thy Saviour and Redeemer. O reseet my soul on what the

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Son of God has done, and has suffered for the love of thee. From the first moment of his conception, thou wast always in his heart. His love for thee brought him down from his heavenly throne, to take sless and blood in the womb of the Virgin: his love for thee made him offer up his sless and blood on the altar of the cross, a sacrifice for thy sins: his love for thee made him bequeath thee this same sless and blood, in an admirable sacrament, to unite thee to himself for eternity. And shall not all this oblige thee to love him, and to

love him with thy whole heart?

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Consider 3dly, that this love which we owe to our God, both as infinitely good in himself, and as infinitely good to us; must be a love of preference: that is, we must love him above all other things whatsoever. For he that loves his worldly honour, his interest, his pleasure, his own will, the gratifying his humours and paffions, or the pleafing of any person, how near, or dear foever, more than his God, is not worthy of God; but is guilty of high treason against him, and of a kind of idolatry, in preferring the creature before the Creator, who is bleffed for evermore. And not only he that prefers any creature before God, but he that even offers to put himself, his own life, his dearest affections, or any other thing created, or even the whole creation, in ballance with his God, so as to love them as much as God, is in like manner unworthy of God, and offers him the greatest outrage imaginable: because the whole universe, compared with God, is a mere nothing: and therefore cannot, without an intolerable injury, be put in ballance with him. Ah! what must I then think of myself, when I have so often preserred empty toys, mere vanities, and lying follies before the living God ? ....

God above all things; and nothing else with him, but what thou lovest for his sake; and with relation to him. Cry out with St. Michael, Quis ut Deus? Who is like to God? And who but he deserves our heart?

Vol. L

### Tuesday after the fourth Sunday.

On loving God with our whole heart.

CONSIDER first, that the first sacrifice which di-vine love calls for, by this great commandment, is that of our heart. My fon, give me thy beart, fays the Wisdom of God, Prov. xxiii. 26. This facrifice must be of the whole heart, and in the nature of a holocauft; that is, of a facrifice, in which the whole victim is given to God, without referve; being first slain, and then laid upon the altar of God, and there confumed with fire even with that fire, which originally came from heaven, Levit, ix. 24. and which was commanded to be kept always burning upon God's altar. Wherefore, in this myffical facrifice of love, this heart of ours, in order to be made a holocauft, should also first be flain, that is, should first die to itself, and to all its disorderly affect tions, by mortification and felf-denial; and to be laid on God's altar, to be wholly dedicated and confecrated to him; and to evaporate, as it were, to him, in the flames of divine love; which is the true fire, that comes down from heaven, to carry us up thither; and which ought always to be kept burning in the mystical temble of God in our fouls. I was sold a sood for you

Consider 2dly, how just, how reasonable, how necessary it is, that we should love our God with our whole heart; so as to give no part of it away from him; since it belongs wholly to him by all manner of titles. He made our heart for himself, to be the eternal seat, and the living temple of his love; and he has given it a certain appetite after him, together with an immense capacity of love, which nothing less than God can fill, or satisfy. He has shed his own most precious blood, to purchase our heart; to cleanse it for himself, and to fill it with his love. It has been solemnly dedicated, sand consecrated to him, at our baptism. He has sent his divine spirit to take possession of it, to make it his kingdom, and to establish his throne in it.

It must be then a most crying injustice, if we offer to alienate any part of our heart from him, who claims it all, upon so many titles. O Christians! let us give him what is his, without reserve: let us divert no part of this small heart of ours away from the immense Lord of heaven and earth: it would be a sacrilege to attempt in a more and a sacrilege to attempt in a more and a sacrilege to a sacrilege.

Confider adly, that the love of God will not admit of a divided heart; he will not fuffer a rival in his kingdom, a partner in his throne, or an idol in his temple. Our God is a jealous God, and therefore, if we follow any other lovers, we lofe his love, and drive him away from us. Alas! my foul, who is this that thou wouldst affociate with God in thy heart ! Is it thy worldly pride, thy carnal affections, thy fenfual inclinations? Affure thyfelf his love cannot endure fuch company as this. Or is it some favourite creature. which thou art unwilling to diflodge, from the place it has occupied in thy heart? Ah! the bed is too narrow: it will not hold two; thou must either part with the creature or the Creator. He loves God too little, who loves any thing elfe with him, which he does not love in him, for his fake, and with fubordination to the love of him bosts maliferent investitive extentions more month

Conclude to love thy friend in God, and thy enemy for God's fake; and all fuch things as thou mayst lawfully love, according to the measure and rule prescribed by divine love; and thus no love of the creature will take off any part of thy heart from the love of the Creator: thus thou shalt love bina with thy whole heart.

## Wednesday after the fourth Sunday.

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On SIDER first, that we are not only to love God with our whole heart; that is, with our whole affection: but also with our whole foul; that is, by aptin in anoust sid shipping Analyse, morand and plying the

plying, and employing all the powers of our foul, in his divine love and fervice: because he made these souls of ours after his own image and likeness, for this very end, that they might be wholly dedicated to his love; and mightturn all their powers and faculties towards him, to ferve and glorify him for ever. Bring then, my fout, bring all thy powers to thy God, and oblige them all to bow down to this divine law of love, and ardently to embrace its happy fervice; which will ennoble and perfect them all. O let thy understanding be ever directed, by its bright light, into the ways of truth! The light of divine love will expel the dark mists raised by thy passions and self-love, which so often over-cloud thee, and make thee go astray. Let thy memory be ever recollected by divine love. Let all thy words and actions, let all thy defires, be ever guided and actuated by this heavenly charity. O bleffed kingdom of divine love, when wilt thou come to me, and take full pofferfion of my whole foul!

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Confider 2dly, that as the will is that ruling power of the foul, which is the proper feat of love; fo'tis the will, amongst all the powers of the foul, that ought, in a special manner, to be dedicated and consecrated to The will ever has good for the object of divine love. her love; fo as not to be able to love, or embrace, any thing, but under the form, or appearance at least, of good. Now God alone is the true and fovereign good; and he alone can fatisfy the inbred appetite she has for good. In the love of him alone she finds herself happy: all other loves do but impose upon her, and deceive her with empty airy appearances. Therefore, for his take, and tecause he is infinitely good in himfelf; as well as for her own fake, and because he is ber only true and fovereign good; the ought to give her whole self up to his heavenly love. O how happy is that will, that is thus wholly dedicated to the love of God! How happy is that will, that is the eternal fervant of divine love, and makes a constant facrifice of her whole liberty and property to the all-wife, all-powerful, and ever-loving will of God!

Consider 3dly, how the great pattern of divine love, Jesus Christ our Saviour, began the work of our redemption, by devoting his whole will, without referve, and with all the ardour of his foul, to do, and to love, the bleffed will of his Father. Hear how he expresses himself, Pf. xxxix. 8, 9. Then faid 1: Bebold I come. In the head of the book it is written of me, that I should do thy will: O my God I have defired it, and thy law in the midst of my heart. This will of his Father was, during his whole life, the continual object of his love; the subject of all his thoughts; the motive of all his words and actions; he loved it so that it was his very food; he laid down his life for the love of it. And didft not thou also, my foul, come into this world to do, and to love, the will of God? Is not thy will given thee for this end? Hast thou any other business here? Is it not also written of thee in the book of life, that thou should'st do the will of God? And canst thou say, with thy Saviour, O my God, 'tis what I have willed, and defired, in the midst of my heart ! O take heed, left if thy will fall from this love of the will of God, and of his holy law, thy name be blotted out of the book of life, which, in effect, is the same as the book of

Conclude to dedicate thy whole foul, with all its powers, to the love of God; and especially to make over thy will to him, without reserve. This is a devotion the most solid, and the most secure; the most agreeable to God, and the most advantageous to thy fels.

## Thursday after the fourth Sunday.

On loving God with our whole mind.

CONSIDER first, that our whale mind ought a form to be consecrated to divine love, according to the import of that greatest and first commandment of our heavenly lover. Now the mind is the seat of thought, and consequently, of consideration, meditation, and re-

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collection in God, Wherefore, to love God with our whele mind, is to have our thoughts ever turned towards him ; to confider him; to meditate daily upon him, and his truths; and upon all that relates to him, or helps to bring the foul to him; to walk always in his prefence; and to keep ourselves recollected in the remembrance of him. This love of the whole mind was required of all the fervants of God, even in the old law; and much more in the new, which is the law of love. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, &c. faid he, Deut vi. and these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart : and thou shalt tell them to thy children, and thou shalt meditate upon them sitting in thy house, and walking on thy journey, sleeping and rising : and thou shalt bind them as a fign on thy hand, and they shall be, and shall move between thy eyes, and thou shalt write them on the doors of thy house. See, my foul, how ffrongly thy God inculcates the perpetual remembrance of him and of his divine law, but more especially of the great commandment of love, which is the fulfilling of the whole law. See how he expects that thy whole mind should be ever full of him. It was that all it best

Confider 2dly, how reasonable and just it is, that we should love our God with our whole mind, by ever remembring and thinking on him. He always remembers us, and thinks on us : his eye is always upon us : from all eternity we have ever had a place in his eternal mind, in which he has cherished us with infinite love: and shall we refuse him the place he calls for inour mind; or put him off with any thing less than our whole mind? Alas! what worthless things are we! How unworthy that this great God should give us any place in his thoughts, or concern himself at all about us! But O'my foul, let us never be fo wretched, fo ungrateful, so wicked, (fince he is pleased to shew so much love to us) as to fuffer any more every empty toy, every idle roving imagination, every vain amusement to take place of him in our mind, and banish him from our thoughts. We cannot be without thinking of fomething all the day long: and what can we think of

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fo noble, fo desirable, so lovely, so charming, so profitable, so delightful, as our God? What are we then, doing, when we let whole days pass in thinking of every thing else but him? Surely this can never be loved ing him with our whole mind: or indeed loving him at all: for where the treasure is we love, there both our heart and mind will be.

Confider 3dly, the great advantages of ever keeping God in our mind, by a recollection of thought and a remembrance of his presence. 'Tis a most powerful restraint to keep us from all fin: tis a perpetual four to make us run on in the way of virtue; it furnishes us with counsel in our doubts; comfort in our afflictions; encouragement in our labours; defence against all our enemies; protection in all dangers; it enlivens our faith, animates our hope, gives a continual encrease to divine charity, and brings us, in some measure, into heaven, whilst we are here living upon earth; by ever keeping us in the company of God, invested as it were with him on all sides, and employed about him, by contemplation and love. O how true it is, that, as diffipation of thought, and forgetfulness of God, is the source of all our evils; so recollection of the mind in God is the fource of all our good! O how happy then are those souls that always feek in this manner, the face of the Lord, and turn their whole mind to him and his love!

Conclude to banish from thee, all impertment thoughts, and vain amusements, all roving imaginations and uscless schemes, which have too often hitherto occupied thy mind, and shut out thy God: and then thy beloved will quickly return to thee, and make thy soul his Paradise.

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# Friday after the fourth Sunday.

On loving God with our whole strength.

CONSIDER first, that the great precept of divine love claims also our whole strength: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole ftrength. As then, by virtue of the commandment of loving God with our whole mind, we are bound to give him our thoughts; fo, by being commanded to love him with our whole frength, we are to give him also our words and actions. We ourselves are his, and that by many titles: we were made by him alone, and for him alone: and therefore as the whole fund is his, fo also ought the whole produce; as the tree is his, so ought all the fruit to grow. for him: it would be a crying injustice to alienate it from him. Wherefore the love of God is not only to refide in our heart, to reign in all the powers of our foul, and to fill our mind, but ought also to shew itself in our whole convertation; and to regulate all our words and actions; fo as to give to each one of them. its due perfection. And this is loving God with our whole firength.

Consider 2dly, that the true love of God is like a fire which cannot lie idle: neither does it content itself with affection only; it always proceeds to effects. It works great things, when occasion and opportunity serve; and, when these are wanting, it will do wonders at least, by the perfection it will give even to the least, and most ordinary, of our actions. This constant aiming at perfection, in our daily and ordinary actions, is one of the most important lessons of a spiritual life; and is the true practice of loving God with our whole strength. Now this perfection of our ordinary actions depends upon the purity and perfection of the intention, from which these actions flow. The intention is pure, when it aims at God alone: it is perfect, when it does all for the love

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God, and for the greater glory of God. Whether you eat or drink, or whatforver elfe you do; do all to the glory of God; fays the Apostle, 1. Cor. x. 31. The meanest action in life is ennobled by this intention; it becomes even an act of divine love; and a new step to unite the foul with God. So that the readiest way to come to love God, with all our frength, is to direct the whole body of our common actions to him, by the pure and perfect intention of ever doing his holy will, and procuring in all things, his greater artote moses we are many stone

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Consider 3dly, that, in order to love God with all our frength, by the perfection of our ordinary actions, besides this purity of intention, which ought both to go before, and to accompany, all we do or fay; we should also labour, in the progress of all our actions and conversations, to season them, as it were, and to fanctify them, by the exercice of frequent aspirations of divine love. This may be practifed by often turning our fouls, on every occasion, to our beloved, confidered as intimately present within us; by longing after him; offering our whole selves to him; rejoicing in his glory; begging for the advancement of the kingdom of his love, both in ourselves, and in the whole world; and lamenting to fee him every where fo much offended, and his love fo much flighted &c. Nothing contributes more to advance the foul in the love of God, than a diligence in this exercice.

Conclude to season all thy actions, in this manner, with divine love, both by beginning them with a pure intention of the glory of God; and accompanying them with frequent acts of love; thus thou shalt love

the Lord thy God with thy whole strength.

saily and ordinary a house, wolfe of the most important leftons of a presidely me, exerts the true practice of loving God Williams Stored of the William Pow this perledionarian Asias and in separate upon the punty and post through the pay my and the which there artions shows really surcession, sweet when it game at cobrutade at a perfect, when a does all for the love abox)

# Saturday after the fourth Sunday.

On returning love for love; and hallen

ONSIDER first, that, besides the most pressing motives we have to love God, by reason of his own infinite beauty and perfection, and the infinite charms that all center in him, to command our love: besides all those attractions, which are found in his infinite mercy, his infinite bounty, his infinite wildom, his infinite truth, &c. which are all infinitely amiable, beyond all that can be expressed, or conceived by the heart of man: befides also, that all our happiness is found in him; and that his love is our greatest honour, our greatest interest, our greatest pleasure; and that which alone can bring us to our fovereign Good, even to the possession of God himself: in fine, besides that the whole creation in general, and every creature in particular, calls upon us to love God, and publiffies aloud his infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, to engage us to love him; a generous foul finds a most strong and urgent motive to love God, in the confideration of the love that he has for us; and has had for us, from all eternity; and the innumerable benefits he has bestowed upon us, in consequence of this eternal love. And yet, O strange ingratitude and infensibility! the far greatest part of poor mortals, notwithstanding all these numberless motives of love, are still cold, in the midft of fo much fire which furrounds them, as it were, on all fides; they still refuse a return of love; and still prefer the meanest of these earthly toys, and even mere filth, before their most loving, and most lovely God. O've heavens be aftonished, at so much basenes, formuch blindness, and so much wickedness mind and

Consider 2dly, what kind of love this is, that God bears to us. He has loved us first: his love is ancient; his love has no beginning; his love is eternal; his love is continual; his thought and heart is always upon us, His love is most faithful and constant: his love

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never forfakes them, that do not first forfake his love. His love is most generous; it imparts all good to his beloved; it prepares an eternal kingdom for them; it gives them'himself for eternity. His love is most pure and difinterested; he desires no other return from his beloved, but their love: and this, not for any service it will do to him; (for it can do him none) but to unite them to himself, and make them happy. In fine his love is infinite, both in its origin, which is himfelf, and in its communications, by giving us an eternal and infinite good, which is also himself. O, my foul, fland aftonished to see that this great God, this boundless Majesty, should have such a love for thee! O give him, in return for his love, all that thou canst give him, by loving him with all thy power; and he will be thine forever.

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Confider 3dly, the benefits, as well general, as particular, that we have received, and daily do receive, from the infinite goodness of this our eternal lover. He is the author of all our good : our very being, our whole foul and body is his gift. He has preferved us, he has nourished and cherished us, from the first moment of our conception to this hour; he has watched over us with an incomparable love; he has defended us from a thousand evils. He has given his Angels a charge over us. He has fent his own Son from heaven for us; to deliver us from fin and hell; and to procure all mercy, grace, and falvation for us. The whole life of the Son of God upon earth was employed in ferving us: he fuffered for us the very worst of torments; he shed all his most precious blood for the love of us. He has left with us all manner of helps, in order to bring us to himself, and to his heavenly kingdom: his word, his church, his facrifice, his facraments, his body and blood, his graces, his inspirations, &c. He has even then heaped favours upon us, and kept us from death and hell, when we were his enemies by mortal fin: he has waited for us with infinite pa? tience, he has called us back with an infinite tinder e neis:



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neis; he has received us with open arms, when we have returned to him; and has mercifully overlooked all our follies, all our disloyalties, all our ingrati-

tude and repeated treasons against him: besides many instances of his particular providence, which every

one of us has met with, in some part or other of our life. And shall not all these, and innumerable other benefits and favours, oblige us to love him? O!

bleffed by all creatures, be his goodness forever!

Conclude to have thy thought and heart always upon him, whose love is always heaping favours upon thee; and to make a perpetual return of love to thy eternal lover.

#### Rogation Sunday.

On the devotion of the time.

CONSIDER first, that these days, between this Sunday, and the ascension of our Lord, are days of devotion: and are called Rogation-days; because they are fet afide by the church, for folemn prayers, and fupplications, joined with abstinence, and penance; in order to turn away the wrath of God, provoked by our fins; to remove far from us his scourges, of wars, plagues, famines, &c. to implore his mercy, for ourfelves and for all his people; and to beg his bleffing upon the fruits of the earth. As the first institution of the devotion of these days was occasioned by a terrible scene of disasters, and visible judgments of God upon the people; to which a stop was put, by dedicating these three days to prayer, and penance : so the success, that attended this first esfay, has encouraged the church to an annual practice of the like devotion ever fince. Hence we may learn, with what dispositions of soul we ought to prefent ourselves before the throne of grace at this time; with what a lively fense of the guilt of our fins, and of the judgments we deferve for them both here, and hereafter; with what defire to return to God from our fins, and to offer him the facrifice of a contrite contrite and humble heart for them; and to join, as it were, in a body, at this time, with the whole people of God, in fuing, in a proper manner, for his mercy, with most humble supplications, and servent prayers.

See, my foul, if these be thy dispositions.

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Confider 2dly, that, although we do not every day feel the heavy hand of divine justice, by the experience of publick calamities, or other visible judgments; yet, if we confider the guilt of fo many crying fins, not only of particular persons, but even of whole nations, which are continually calling to God for vengeance, we shall find too much reason to apprehend that the fword of God's justice is even now hanging over our heads; and that the worst of his judgments will quickly fall upon Christendom in general; if not averted by prayer and penance. This consideration ought to determine all Christians in general, (even the most innocent, if they have any concern for the publick danger, or true charity for the fouls of their neighhours) gladly to embrace to happy an opportunity as this, of joining with all the children of God in humiliations, and prayer, in order to prevent the thunder of heaven from suddenly breaking over our heads; and hurrying away thousands into the bottomless pit. And as for every particular finner, now is the most favourable time, for him to fue for mercy, because at this time, the whole church joins, in a particular manner, in praying for all finners. And if he should neglect this opportunity, what may he not justly fear from his repeated treasons; from the wrath of God above, ready to fall upon him; from the mouth of hell below, gaping to devour him; from the devil, to whom he has fold himself, and from that monster mortal fin, (which as even worse than the devil) which he always carries about with him? O finners neglect not these days of a falvation, left they never return to you any more. Now is your time, hereafter there may be no time afots you available of the property and the best part suo.

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for mercy, and for all good, both for ourselves, and for our neighbours, from humble and fervent prayer. In the epistle (St. James v.) we are taught the great efficacy of continual prayer, with an exhortation to pray for one another, in order to salvation; and a declaration of what the reward will be of them that contribute to the salvation of others. In the gospel (St. Luke xi.) we are exhorted by Christ our Lord, to a holy importunity and perseverance in prayer; and we are taught, by the example of a friend, and of a sather, to look for all good gifts from our heavenly Father, by the means of earnest prayer. O what a friend indeed, what a parent have we in him! or who is like to him in bounty and mercy? Let us then be encouraged by shese divine oracles, to go with considence at this time to the throne of grace: that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid, Hebr. iv. 16.

Conclude to join at this time with the whole church of God in prayer and penance, that thou mayst obtain mercy both for thyself, and for thy neighbours. Heaven can never resist a general assault, made by the whole people of God, by the means of prayer, when

joined with a contrite and humble heart.

#### Rogation-Monday.

On the means of attaining to the love of God.

Consider first, that, as the desire of wildom is the true beginning of wildom: so the first step to the love of God, (which is true wisdom indeed) is an earnest desire to love God. Blessed are they that bunger and thirst after this heavenly justice: for they shall be filled, Matt. v. This desire makes us pray servently, seek incessantly, knockearnestly, at the gate of divine love. It makes us rise early in quest of this heavenly wisdom: it makes us glad to part with all things else, that we may purchase this precious pearl; that we may acquire this incomparable treasure. He that with this desire, aspires after divine love, already begins to possess what he desires:

and the more he relishes the sweetness of what he begins to possess, the more he aspires after it. Thus the defire of love begets love: and love begets a stronger defire; which begets a stronger love. So that the great means of learning to love God, is, by repeated defires and acts of love, to taste and see how sweet God is; and how sweet a thing it is to love him.

Confider 2dly, that divine love will not be found by us, nor come to dwell in our fouls, if we take no care to keep our inward house clean and pure for our Bleffed are the clean of heart; for they shall See God. Matt. v. So that if we entertain in our interiour any irregular company; that is, if our affections are fet upon worldly vanities, upon filthy lucre, upon fensual pleasures, upon gratifying our corrupt inclinations; divine love will not come near us: because it cannot endure such unclean company as this is, nor dwell in a foul that is enflaved to worldly defires, and diforderly passions. These are to be parted with, or at least brought into order and subjection, if we would learn to love God. This is the meaning of that Gospel lesson of felling all, to acquire the precious pearl of the kingdom of God, by his love's reigning in our fouls. kingdom of divine love will allow of no rival, no ufurper, no rebel in its dominions. The spouse of divine love must belong wholly to her spouse alone, she must be a garden close shut, to all others, a fountain fealed up, for him alone. Cantic. iv. So that another necessary means of attaining to divine love, is a general mortification of all foreign and irregular affections.

Consider 3dly, that the sovereign means of acquiring divine love is the daily exercice of mental prayer; which employs all the powers of the soul in waiting upon God. Here the memory represents all the motives we have to love him: here the understanding is taught to know him: here the affections of the will are enflamed at his presence: this then is the true school of love. O my soul, let us daily frequent it; not only by having a regular time fixed for this great exercice of love, but by practifing it in some measure at all times; by

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membrance of God's presence; by frequently calling back the soul to him from all her distractions and evagations; by repeated aspirations and ejaculations of love, &c. This is walking with God indeed, like the ancient Saints; this is taking God along with us, wherever we are going; and whatever we are doing; this is walking in love. O how happy is that life which is thus dedicated to divine love!

Conclude to embrace all the means that may bring thee to this happiness. O begin now from this hour to set out in quest of this fountain of life! Let no opposition of earth or hell discourage thee. Never leave off thy search, till thou come to drink of this heavenly water; which will become in thee a fountain springing up to everlasting life.

### Rogation-Tuesday.

On acts of divine love.

CONSIDER first, that the love of God, is like a fire : its nature is to be always in motion, and always tending upwards, towards its heavenly element: it quickly expires, and dies, if it lies idle. Wherefore if we would keep it alive, we must nourish it, and blow it up, by frequent acts of love; and those not mere verbal acts; by telling God that we solove him, whilft our heart perhaps is far from him: but by the real exercice of loving God, both in our beart, and in our works. We exercise the love of God in our heart, by affection; we exercise the love of God in our works, by effects. We love God with a love of chaste concupisence, when in heart, and work, we tend to him as our sovereign good, and aspire after the eternal enjoyment of him. We love him with a love of benevolence, that is, of fincere and perfect friendthip, and charity, when, both in heart, and work, we give our whole felves, with all our thoughts, words, and deeds, and all things else to him; as being infinitely Lhe

nitely good in himself. 'Tis just we should exercise ourselves in acts of the love of God, in both these ways; as in both these ways, he is infinitely amiable; but more especially that we should tend to love him with the love of benevolence, by giving ourselves, and all things, to him.

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Confider adly, that benevolence is a love, by which we wish all manner of good to the person beloved: a love, by which we earnestly seek and procure whatever may be for his honour, interest, or pleasure: by which we delight in all his advantages; and are concerned at all his losses, &c. Wherefore, if we would make proper acts of the love of benevolence towards God; we must defire, seek, and procure, as much as lyes in us, the greater honour and glory of his name; and the propagation of his kingdom, both in our own hearts, and throughout the whole world; and pray that all men may know him, love him, and ferve him: we must rejoice at every thing that is agreeable to his holy will; and be concerned at every thing that of-This is the proper exercice of the love of fends him. benevolence; these are far better acts of divine charity, than merely telling God that we love him. My foul what are thy dispositions? Dost thou sincerely defire, and heartily pray, that all the world may know, love, and ferve thy God: that all his creatures, in heaven and earth, may give perpetual glory to him: that the reign of fin may be abolished; and that the kingdom of God may take possession of all hearts; that none may refift or rebel against his orders; but that all may embrace, and bow down, and adore his divine will? If fo, there is no doubt but thou lovest God. Such as these are perfect acts of the love of God.

Consider 3dly, that the exercise of the love of God, which, above all others, is recommended in holy Scriptures, is the loving of his divine law, and the keeping of his commandments. This is the charity (that is, the love) of God that we keep his commandments.

1. John v. 3. He that keepeth his word, in him, in very deed, the charity of God is perfected, chap. ii. 5.

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The beloved disciple continually recommends the acts of this kind of divine love; and the pfalms are full of aspirations, or breathings, of a soul that is in love with the holy law and commandments of God. This devotion to the commandments of God is loving God indeed, with a true and effectual love: because it is giving up, for his fake, what is most dear to us, viz. our own will and liberty, and making a present of it to him: 'tis giving him what he chiefly calls for at our hands: whatfoever else we give him can never content him. He always preferred the facrifice of obedience before all other facrifices; because here we facrifice to him our own dear will, and immolate it, as it were, to his honour and glory. This kind of love is the fafest from illusions: for whosoever loves the commandments of God, and his divine will; and makes all that is in him submit thereunto, most certainly loves God; and is in the right way that will bring him fafe to God. No other devotion, without this, can fecure when we die down at the look of the cross we want

Conclude to exercise thyself daily in all these ways of loving God: and ever remember, that loving God, and keeping his commandments, go always hand in hand; because we cannot love God, without loving

his will, notified to us by his commandments.

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### Rogation-Wednesday.

On other exercices of the love of God.

ONSIDER first, that divine love is also exercifed in the penitential way, by fouls that, like Magdalene, (of whom our Lord pronounced that many fins were forgiven her, because she loved much) go daily to the feet of Christ in spirit, to wash them with their tears, flowing from a heart, full of a fense of the infinite goodness of God, and of a deep regret for having offended that infinite goodness by their fins. This exercice of penitential love, as we see in the case of Magdalene, is most acceptable to our Lord, and most effectual

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effectual for obtaining the discharge of all our fins; and, if diligently purfued, is capable of advancing, even those that have been the greatest sinners, to a high degree of virtue and fanctity. And whofoever has forfeited his baptismal innocence, by mortal sin, if he would follow the rules of Christian prudence, in chusing thesafest way, in a case where his all is at stake, should endeavour to pursue this exercice of penitential love, and never end it but with his life. Thus did all those great penitents of old, who became afterwards fuch glorious Saints. And this kind of exercice of love will become in a manner natural, to all fuch as have a right sense of what God is, and what sin is; and of the dreadful evil they have been guilty of in offending, though it were but once in their life, fo great and

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fo good a God. Last silvery within the first said Consider 2dly, that there are also other ways of mourning, in which we may exercise a love of God, most agreeable to him, and beneficial to ourselves. As, when we fit down at the foot of the cross; and there contemplating the extreme anguish and distress, the ffripes, and wounds, the racking pains, and torments, of our dear Redeemer, with all that complication of fufferings in all kinds, which he endured in his paffion, for the love of us; we excite in our fouls suitable affections of an ardent love in the way of compassion, for our crucified lover, and feed this fire with tears, flowing at the fight of his blood, which, as it shews forth, in the most sensible manner, his tender affection for us. fo it most strongly calls for a return of our love, accompanied with a bitter grief to fee our beloved treated with fo much cruelty, and contempt. Upon the fame principle of the concern that every true lover has to fee the outrages offered to his beloved, we may also exercise a love most agreeable to our Lord, in mourning for the innumerable fins, that are daily committed against him, throughout the whole world: to see his infinite goodness slighted; his facred laws, and ordinances, troden under foot; his mercies continually abused, and his most adorable majesty treated with the utmost effectuat

and for him, redeemed by the blood of his Son, and loaded with innumerable favours, to engage them to love him, and serve him. Oh! how can any true lover of God endure to see these outrages offered to his infinite majesty, without having his heart perfectly

broken with grief, to fee his love thus abused.

Consider 3dly, that, besides these exercices of the love of benevolence, in the penitential and compassionate way; there is another most perfect exercice of love. and which comes the nearest to the love of the blessed in heaven; and that is in the way of joy and congratulation: as when we rejoice in God, and in his boundless perfections: when we are delighted to think that he is what he is; infinitely good, infinitely holy, infinitely happy, infinitely perfect: that he is the fovereign Lord of all; and that nothing can be added to him, becaule he is every way infinite. O what a comfort, what a pleasure, what a joy it is to a true lover of God, to think that whatfoever may come to himfelf, or to any other thing in the world; his love at least, whom he loves without comparison more than himself, and all things else, will always be infinitely glorious, infinitely rich, and infinitely happy! O how like is this love to that of the bleffed, even to that love that makes them bleffed, which is an eternal joy in God, and in all the beauties and perfections they contemplate in him! This is their eternal delight.

Conclude to dedicate thyself, for time and eternity, to this most perfect love of God. Make it thy employment here, and it will be thy eternal reward hereafter. In the mean time, labour also to promote, as much as thou canst, upon every occasion, the praise and glory of thy Maker, the interests of his kingdom, the fulfilling of all his wills, as well in thyself, as in all others: be concerned at every thing that displeases him; put thy heart continually in his hands: give thyself, and all things else, to him, a hundred times in the day. Such acts as these, frequently repeated in the day, will ensure to thee the rich treasure of divine love: by such

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exercices, thou wilt effectually choose the better part, which will never be taken from thee.

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## Ascension - Day.

On the Ascension of our Lord. and and

CONSIDER first, that our Lord, after having employed forty days upon earth, to comfort and encourage his disciples; to confirm them in the faith of his refurrection; and to instruct them in the mysteries of his kingdom: on the fortieth day, taking them out with him to mount Olivet, lifted up his hands, and gave them his bleffing; and fo afcended up visibly to heaven, before their eyes, till a cloud interposed, and took him out of their fight. Bow thyself down, my soul, to receive with joy and gratitude this bleffing of thy Saviour, ascending now to his Father, and to thy Father; follow him in spirit, and contemplate the triumphs and joy of all the heavenly legions, that come out to meet him, and attend him to his Father's throne: fee how he brings along with him all the patriarchs, prophets, and spirits of the just, into those regions of eternal bliss, and presents them to his Father, as the first fruits of his purchase, which he had made upon earth, with his precious blood. See with joy thy human nature, in the person of thy Lord, raised above all the Cherubims and Seraphims; and seated at the right hand of God: and exercise thyself, upon this occasion, in acts of love, in the way of congratulation, and of rejoicing at the exaltation, and at the triumphs of thy Saviour.

Consider 2dly, that our Lord, by his ascension, has taken possession of the kingdom of heaven, not only for himself, but also for us. He purchased this kingdom for us with his own blood: he opened the gates of it by his death; he shewed us the way to it by his resurrection; and, by his ascension, has given us, as it were, an earnest of our coming one day to reign there with him. He is our head; we are his members: it is but natural that where the head is, there the members

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bers should also be: it would be unnatural; it would be keeping them in a state of violence; to keep them separate from their head. What comfort then to Christian souls to see their head, by this mystery of his ascension into heaven, raised to the highest seat in that eternal kingdom; in order to draw them thither after him; and, in the mean time, preparing a place for them there: that he may, in proper time, come and take them to himself, that where he is, they also may be. St.

John xiv.

Confider 3dly, what further motives we have for rejoicing in the ascension of our Lord, when we reflect that he has entered into heaven, in quality of our parent, of our friend, of our advocate and mediator, of our high priest, &c. O what encouragements are here to raise our hopes! We have a tender Father in heaven, the true parent of our fouls, who has all power in the court of heaven, and takes exceedingly to heart our true interest: we have there, in the person of our Redeemer, a most affectionate friend, who loves us with an incomparable love: we have a most faithful mediator and advocate, who ever pleads for us with the powerful eloquence of his facred wounds, which he continually represents to his Father, in our behalf: we have a high priest, who, to make atonement for us, has carried in to this heavenly fanctuary, not the blood of oxen, or of goats, but his own most facred blood, flied for obtaining for us an everlasting redemption. O fee, my foul, upon how many accounts thou oughteff to rejoice on this festival of the ascension of thy Lord, if thou either lovest him, or thyself.

Conclude to consider this festival of the ascension of our Lord, as one of the principal solemnities of the year. on The church of God considers it as such, and therefore, daily commemorates, in a particular manner, in the most facred mysteries, not only the passion and resurrection, but also the ascension of her heavenly spoule as the mystery which put the last seal as it were to the great work of our redemption; and placed this sless of ours in heaven, even at the right hand of the Father, and

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which, at the fall of our first parents, had been fentenced to return to its original earth.

### Friday after the Ascension.

On the lessons we are to learn from the Ascension of our Lord.

ONSIDER first, that as we ought to imitate the resurrection of our Lord, by a spiritual resurrection from the death of fin, to the life of grace: fo we must also imitate the ascension of our Lord, by a spiritual ascension into heaven, and by dwelling there in spirit with him; that, as we hope one day to ascend thither after him in effect, we may learn the way, by afcending after him, every day in affection. Our Lord has told us, that where our treasure is, there our heart shall also be. Our treasure is that which we love the most and the best of all things: now if this be Christ, as it ought to be, as he is ascended into heaven, our treasure is in heaven; and therefore, our heart should follow its treasure, by ascending after him, in spirit, into heaven, and by fixing there its abode with its beloved. O happy ascension of love, which teaches the foul to find in some measure a heaven upon earth; and, interiourly, to have always her conversation in heaven, whatever occupation, or company, the may be exteriourly engaged in upon earth!

Confider 2dly, that, in order to be qualified to afrend after Christ our Lord into heaven, we must first get rid of our vices, and criminal passions: for none of these can be admitted into that blessed abode: there is no room for them there. The luft of the flesh, the luft of the eyes, the pride of life, can have no place in heaven! all their pursuits are earthly; instead of carrying the foul upwards towards heaven, they press her down towards hell. They are all flaves to Satan; they bind the poor foul fast in his chains; they will not suffer her to follow after Christ; they are his mortal enemies. See then, my foul, if none of these have dominion over

thee :

thee: fee if pride, avarice, passion, or lust, have not more influence on thee, to keep thee asar off from Christ, in this region of sin and death, than the love of God has to draw thee up to heaven after him. O beg of thy Lord, through his triumphant ascension, by which, ascending on high, he led captivity captive; he gave gifts to men, (Eph. iv. 8.) that he would break all thy bonds in sunder, which keep thee from ascending after him; and, by the precious gifts of his grace, set thee at liberty, to sly upwards with the wings of the dove, till thou

canst come to repose in him, and with him.

Confider 3dly, that the foul can never be rightly qualified to fly up towards heaven, by this spiritual afcension, as long as her wings, that is her affections, are not disengaged. For as the bird cannot fly, if its wings be either entangled, or dawbed over with birdlime: fo the foul cannot fly, if her affections are either entangled in the nets of the world, or defiled with the birdlime of a misplaced love. So that 'tis not enough for a foul that defires to ascend to heaven after Chrift, to be free from downright lust, or other scandalous exceffes and paffions; but she must also be disengaged in her affections, from every love of person, or thing, that ties her down as it were to the earth; that captivates her thoughts; that fills her with folicitudes and perplexities; or otherwise takes off her heart from the love of God. All fuch love as this disqualifies the foul from flying towards heaven; it keeps her far below, groveling in the mire. Nor let her flatter herself that her affections are innocent, because the object is not of itself criminal: for let the object be what it will, 'tis a crime to prefer it to God; or to love it fo, as to forfeit, for its fake, the love of God.

Conclude to be jealous of thyself, how thou placest thy affections here upon earth; lest they hinder thy slight towards thy true treasure in heaven: My love is my weight, says St. Augustine, that way am I carried,

whither soever I am carried.

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### Saturday after the Ascension.

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VOL. I.

Other lessons to be learnt from the ascension of our

CONSIDER first, that as, in consequence of the ascension of our Lord, we ought to be daily carried, as it were upon the wings of love, up to him in his heavenly kingdom; fo we ought, by this frequent ascending thither, to be daily more and more enamoured with that kingdom of love; to conceive the highest ideas of that incomprehensible happiness, of the soul's being there eternally united to her God, and absorpt in him; and with the most ardent defires, to long daily more and more for this fountain of life. But what then must the fentiments of the foul be, when, after she has begun, by the practice of this devotion, to relish something of the sweetness of the good things of her Lord in the land of the living; the finds herself still a prisoner in this foreign land, in this earthly Babylon? O how does the wish to be delivered from this captivity! To fee an end of this long pilgrimage! How does fhe lament her banishment in this vale of tears; at so great a distance from her true country! How does she despise this miferable world, and even loath its choicest enjoyments! O my foul that these were our sentiments!

Confider 2dly, and give ear to the exhortation of the Apostle, Coloff. iii. 1. &c. If you be rifen with Christ, feek the things that are above, where Christ is fitting at the right hand of God: mind the things that are above, not the things that are on the earth. For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then shall you also appear with him in glory. How happy are those Christians, that enter into these sentiments; upon occasion of the ascension of our Lord: who consider Christ as the great object of their love, and their true life; and, as he is in heaven, fitting at the right hand of God, turn all their intentions and affections towards heaven: who confider this their true life as absent, and as hidden from them here below; and therefore, continually aspire aster that happy revolution, when they shall cease to die, and begin to live! And, in the mean time, whilst they remain in this region of death, they seek, as much as they can, to divest themselves of this body of death, by mortifying, as the Apostle admonishes, their members that are upon earth; and by crucifying the sless, with its

vices and concupiscences.

Consider 3dly, that, as we are informed by church history, our Lord, at his ascension, left the last prints of his feet upon the top of mount Olivet, in the place from whence he ascended: which no length of time, nor encampments of armies, or other accidents, or even industry of man, could ever efface, or cover over: that we might learn, that the true way for all that desire to follow Christ, by ascending after him into heaven, is to have his footsteps always before their eyes, and to walk in them, by a diligent imitation of his life and conversation. They that are careful to walk in his footsteps are his disciples indeed; and they that are his disciples indeed, will infallibly, if they persevere, ascend to heaven after him, and be for ever with him.

Conclude to lay up in thy heart all these lessons, which Christ desires to teach thee in his ascension: and so to adhere to his sootsteps, that nothing in life or death may

ever separate thee from him.

# Sunday within the Octave of the Ascension.

On the precept of charity to our neighbours.

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ONSIDER first, that, after that greatest and first commandment, of loving God with our whole heart and soul, the next of all the divine precepts is, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. This, saith our Lord, is like to the other, and indeed it has so necessary a connexion with it, that we cannot suffil the one without

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without the other. God is charity, fays the beloved difciple, I John iv. 16. and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him. And again, he that loveth not (his neighbour) knoweth not God; for God is charity, v. 8. And again, if any man fay, I love God, and bateth his brother, he is a liar, v. 20. These two precepts of charity; by which we are commanded, in the first place, to love God above all things; and, in the next place, to love our neighbours as ourselves, contain an abridgment of the whole duty of a Christian. They are two branches that fpring from the fame root; and belong to the felf fame divine virtue: because the fame motives that oblige us to love God for his own goodness sake, oblige us also to love all that are made after his image, and redeemed by the blood of his Son, for the fake of their Maker and Redeemer. 'Tis he that requires this love of us; and requires it in fuch manner, as that we should love him in our neighbours, and love them in him. O the infinite goodness and bounty of our God! that, notwithstanding the immense distance there is betwixt us and him, he should be pleased to put us as it were upon an equality, by requiring that we should love one another, with the like love, and upon the fame motive, as we love himfelf.

Consider 2dly, that this charity to our neighbours is fo effentially necessary to falvation, that, without it, tho' we spoke with the tongues of men and Angels, and had the gift of prophecy, and all knowledge of the deepest mysteries, and faith strong enough even to remove mountains, we should still be nothing; and though we should give our whole substance to the poor, and our bodies to the flames, it would profit us nothing, faith St. Paul, I Cor. xiii. He that loveth not, faith St. John. abideth in death, I John iii. 14. He is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth; because the darkness hatb blinded his eyes, chap. ii. II. And this charity, which is fo necessary to falvation, must be general; for, as we learn from our Lord in the parable of the good Samaritan, St. Luke x. all menwithout exception of nations or opinions, are here to be incurra. Cc2

confidered as our neighbours: and if there should be any one mortal, whom we should exclude from our charity, our heavenly Father would exclude us from his

mercy. St. Matt. xviii. 35.

Confider 3dly, how much our Lord takes to heart, that we should have this mutual love and charity for one another. He has made it his favorite commandment; the very badge by which he would have his difciples known and distinguished. I give you a new commandment, saith he, St. John xiii. 34, 35. that you love one another, as I have loved you. --- By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. And chap. xv. 12. This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you. And this mutual love for one another, he defires may be fo perfect, that it may, in some measure, resemble the love and union that there is between him and his Father: as he has declared in that heavenly prayer that he made for his disciples, St. John xvii. 20, 21. And not for them only, faid he, do I pray, but for them also, who, through their word, shall believe in me : that they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee: that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou haft This mutual love, this union and charity, he inculcates in these strong terms, in this last conference, of his mortal life, with his beloved disciples; that both they and we might confider it as his last dying injunction; and as a most precious legacy, which he has bequeathed to us all. O my foul, embrace this legacy of love, which has been thus left thee by thy Lord, dying for the love of thee.

Conclude to prove thyfelf henceforward to be a disciple of Christ indeed, by this spirit of universal charity for all; as he has died out of charity for all. In the beginning of the church the multitude of the believers had but one heart, and one soul, Acts iv. 32. Such was their mutual love and union. O blessed charity, when shall we see thee once more reign in this manner amongst

Christians?

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# Monday within the Octave of the Ascension.

On the excellence of fraternal charity.

ONSIDER first, that charity is the queen of virtues, and the most excellent of them all, according to the doctrine of the Apostle. 1, Cor. xiii. 13 and this, not only as the loves God in himfelf, but also as she loves him in our neighbours, by loving them for his fake: for, as the motive is the fame in both these loves, so, the virtue is the same. Hence St. Peter calls upon all Christians, I Peter iv. 8. BE-FORE ALL THINGS have a constant mutual charity: for charity coveretb the multitude of fine. And St. Paul, Coloff. iii. 14, ABOVE ALL thefe THINGS bave charity, which is the bond of perfection. He adds, Rom. xiii. 8. 10. that the love of our neighbours is the fulfilling of the law and commandments of God: and Gal. v. 14. That all the law is fulfilled in this one. word: thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyfelf. Hence also St. John the beloved disciple, both in his words, and in his writings, continually inculcated this duty of loving one another, as the favourite virtue of Jesus Christ; and, in a manner, the whole duty of a Chris stian. O my foul let us then embrace, with all our affections, this amiable virtue, this chief favourite of Christ and his Saints: let us value it as an inestimable treasure: and be ever willing rather to lose any thing else than this bleffed charity.

Consider 2dly, that we may with truth apply to charity, what the wiseman writes of wisdom: that all good things came to him together with her, and innumerable riches through her hands, Wisd. vii. 11. what these riches are that come through the hands of charity, we learn from the Apostle, 1, Cor. xiii. 4 &c. Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up; is not ambi-

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tious; feeketh not her own: (that is, she is not felfish) she is not provoked to anger, she thinketh no evil;
she rejoiceth not in iniquity (that is, in any thing that is
wrong) but rejoiceth with the truth: (being pleased with
all that is right and true:) she beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things,
&c. See my soul, how many virtues are the constant
attendants, and offspring of charity. O how amiable is
this character of the truly charitable Christian! O
how lovely is this parent of all this heavenly train!

Consider 3dly, that charity, in the strictest sense, is indeed a heavenly virtue: as well because she maintains her ground in heaven, and receives her full perfection there, where faith and hope are no more: (Charity, faith the Apostle I Cor. xiii. 8, never falleth away.) as also because the eternal charity of the Saints is no small part of their heavenly happiness: their love of God is their effential bliss; their love of one another in God, and the joy that they conceive at one another's happiness, multiplies, as I may say, their heaven, to as many fold, as there are happy spirits and Saints in heaven. And no wonder, fince charity, even here below, when it is perfect, brings with it unspeakable joy, and, in a manner, a heaven upon earth; by keeping all the passions under, and establishing the reign of peace, and joy, in the soul. As, on the other hand, where there is no charity, the paffions are all let loose; hatred, envy, jealousy, revenge, &c: the foul is always in a storm; she is a ftranger to peace; the is in confusion and darkness; and the very image of hell: where 'tis no small part of their mifery that they cannot love.

Conclude to afpire, as much as thou art able, after this heavenly charity: she will teach thee, whilst thou art here upon earth, to emulate the love of the blessed in heaven: she alone will bring thee to their

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# Tuesday within the Octave of the Ascension.

On the exercice of fraternal charity.

CONSIDER first, that the charity which we owe to our neighbours, like that by which we love God, is in the nature of a fire, which is ever in motion; and must be kept alive by being nourished with it's proper fewel, by the means of repeated acts; and these not exercised only by affection, but by effects: my little children faith St. John (1. John ch. iii. 15.) let us love, not in word, nor in tongue, but in deed, and in truth. Fraternal charity is not a love of concupiscence; 'tis not a selfish love, that looks no further, than at the honour, profit, or pleafure, which may accrue to one's felf from our neighbours: 'tis a love of fincere benevalence: now as 'tis the nature of the love of benevolence, to defire, to feek, to procure, and to promote, whatever may be for the real good of the person beloved; to be delighted with all that is to his advantage; and to be concerned at all that hurts him: fo this benevolent love, which we owe to our neighbours, by virtue of the precept of fraternal charity, is to be kept alive in our fouls, by repeated acts of its own kind; by frequently exercifing, in favour of our neighbours, as well the spiritual, as the corporal works of mercy; with a pure intention of God's glory, and their welfare; by bewailing their errors and vices; by earnestly praying for their conversion and salvation; and neglecting nothing in our power to procure it. Do we evidence our charity for our neighbours, by the exercice of such acts as thefe!

Consider 2dly, that the love of true charity, which we are commanded to bear to our neighbours, is to love them for God's sake; to love them in God; and in order to God. Fraternal charity is a branch of

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that fame divine virtue, by which we love God; and ought ever to be grounded upon the fame divine motive, of God's own infinite goodness. No carnal, worldly, or natural affection, influenced by flesh and blood, or by any other consideration but God, can be called charity. If then we would fulfil this great precept, we must not content ourselves with loving our neighbours at any rate: heathens and publicans often love one another, and affift one another, and yet they are void of divine charity. But we must love according to God, and with relation to God: we must love in our neighbours the image of God: we must consider them as made by him, and for him; and as redeemed by the precious blood of his Son: we must love them for his fake; and because it is his holy will and commandment. And we must exercise the acts of this love, by contributing, on every occcasion, all that lies in us, to bring them to the love of God here, and to his kingdom hereafter; that they may glorify him in a happy eternity. This is true charity indeed.

Consider 3dly, by what rules we are to be directed, and regulated, in the exercice of the love of our neighbours. The old commandment of the divine law was to love every neighbour as ourselves. The new commandment of the gospel of Christ, is to love every. neighbour, even as Christ has loved us, John xiii. 34. Have we ever feriously reflected upon the perfection of the love, which these rules require of us? To love. our neighbours as ourselves. O how tender is the love we bear ourselves! how intent upon our own welfare! how fensible of every thing that we apprehend as an evil to us! Is the love of our neighbours any thing like this? Do we treat them as we would defire to be treated ourselves? Do we wish them the same good as we wish ourselves? Are we concerned at the evils which befall them, as if they had befallen ourselves? I fear we cannot fay it. Again. To love our neighbours as Christ has loved us. O what a love was this! He has laid down his very life for the love of us: and this without any defert on our fide: for we de-

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ferved nothing but hell: we were his enemies by fin, Can our love for our neighbours stand the test of this rule? Are we willing to part with so much as our own humour, our convenience, our inclinations, our pleasure, or satisfaction, for the love of our neighbours, and rather than give them occasion of grief, or sin? If not, how far are we from loving our neighbours, as Christ has loved us!

Conclude to exercise daily repeated acts of fraternal charity, both in the affective, and the effective way: lest otherwise thy love for thy neighbours, for want of nourishment, quickly languish away and die. Have thy eye always upon those two great rules of charity; and regulate thy love by them.

# Wednesday within the Octave of the Ascension.

On the different branches of fraternal charity.

CONSIDER first, that charity is fruitful in its offspring, and spreads itself into different branches; in order to make the whole man perfect; by regulating both his judgment, and his will; and directing him, in his thoughts, in his words, and in his actions. For there is a charity that corrects the natural bent of our corruption, which is ever tending to suspect, and judge the worst, of our neighbours; and to be harsh, and censorious in their regard. And there is a charity that inclines the will in their favour, fo as to wish them well in every respect, and to forgive all injuries. There is a charity that employs the thoughts, in studying to promote their good, and to prevent and remedy their evils: and there is a charity that directs the tongue, and restrains it from uttering any words, to the prejudice of any one. In fine, there is a charity that feafons and fweetens the whole body of our actions, as far as they relate to our neighbours, and squares them all according to that golden rule, of doing in every

thing as we would be done by. The practice of all these branches of charity, in God, and for God, makes

a perfect Christian, and brings to God.

Confider 2dly, that, amongst the branches of fraternal charity, there is one that our Lord feems to take in a special manner to heart; infomuch that he has declared our eternal lot shall be decided, by our diligence, or negligence, in the exercice of it, Matt. xxv. and this is charity to the poor. These he declares he has fubstituted in his own stead; and what we do for them, he takes as done for himself, v. 40, 45. This branch of charity, duly exercifed, in proportion to every man's circumstances, will bring thousands one day into the happy tabernacles of everlasting life. But where shall the unjust stewards then appear, who, having the substance of their master, viz. their worldly riches, entrusted in their hands, with express orders to employ their superfluities at least, in relieving the neceffities of his poor children; either covetoully detain, or prodigally squander away, that which should be their fupport; and to which they have an indifputable title? Alas! What a figure will their extravagant expences then make! What account will they be able to give, of all that they have facrificed to pride, and vanity; to luxury and intemperance; to gaming and criminal diversions! Will not all these robberies of the fubftance of the poor cry to heaven against them for vengeance at that day?

Consider 3dly, that there is still another branch of charity, the most difficult of all, and yet absolutely necessary to salvation, and that is to love our enemies. I say to you, saith our Lord, Matt. v. 44, love your enemies, do good to them that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you. And this he insists upon in such manner, as to exclude from his mercy here, and from his kingdom hereafter, all such as exclude any one, how much an enemy soever, from their charity. But how shall we acquire, or how shall we practise, this charity for our enemies? O! 'tis not a virtue of our own growth: it must come

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down to us from heaven, from our great Father, who maketh his fun to rife upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust. 'Tis by fervent prayer we must obtain it; and, when we have got it, we must lay it up in our hearts as a rich heavenly treasure: and exercise it, as the Saints have done, by praying for our enemies in sincerity of heart, and seeking, on all occasions, to overcome, in their regard, evil with good. O how happy shall we be, if, by any such means as these, we prevail to bring them, that before were our enemies, to be, for the time to come, friends both to God and to us? 'Tis what the Saints have often done by their charity, by their meekness, and by their prayers.

Conclude to labour with all thy power, both to acquire, and to exercise, all these branches of charity, if thou desirest to come to God, who is charity, and who

is not to be come at but by charity.

# Thursday the Octave of the Ascension. On the great pattern of charity.

ONSIDER first, how Christ Jesus our Lord has given us himself for a pattern of perfect charity, in the parable of the good Samaritan, (Luke x.) He himself came down in person from his throne above, to fave poor man, who had unhappily fallen among the infernal robbers; and was stript by them of all grace; and grievously wounded in all his faculties. He was the good shepherd, that came down to seek with forrow the lost sheep, in order to lay him upon his own shoulders, and carry him home, with joy, to his heavenly fold. 'Tis here we plainly discover the infinite charity both of the Father, and of the Son. hath the charity of God appeared towards us, fays the beloved disciple, because God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we may live by him. In this is charity: not as though we had loved God, but because be

hath first loved us, and fent his Son to be a propitiation

for our fins, I John iv. 9, 10.

Consider 2dly, that the whole life of Christ was a continual exercice of divine charity. From the first moment of his conception, in the womb of his bleffed mother, till his expiring on the cross, his foul was ever employed in loving his heavenly Father, and in offering himself to all his wills; and for the love of his Father, and because it was his Father's will, he dedicated his whole life also to the love of us; ever thinking on us, praying for us, and labouring for our eternal falvation. But O the infinite charity he has fhewn us in all that he endured in his passion and death for the love of us! Christians pass over in your minds all the stages of his passion, from his prayer and agony in the garden, to his expiring on the cros: and fee the multitude, and variety, of torments he has there suffered for us. Ah! how muh have our fins cost this innocent lamb of God! Ah how dearly has he loved us! O, my foul, in the midst of all these tortures he had thee in his heart; and, even then, was pleading thy cause, with his eternal Father, when, by thy fins, thou wast crucifying him. O! what return shall we make him for this infinite love!

Confider 3dly, that the Son of God has not only loved us, during the whole course of his mortal life; and loved us even to death, by laying down his life for the love of us; but he has carried his love for us beyond the bounds of death, in an admirable legacy, which he has bequeathed us, the night before his paffion; by means of which, to fatisfy his love, he remains always with us, in the divine mysteries; even to the end of the world. Here he feeds our fouls with his precious body, and blood: here he unites us to himself, in such manner as to abide in us, and we in him': here he is a perpetual source of grace, of love, and of true life, to our fouls: here he communicates him? felf to us, like the manna of heaven, for the support of our pilgrimage, till he brings us to the true land of promise; where he will lovingly give himself to us for all eternity. And shall not so much charity on

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this divine virtue?

Son Wender Woods . Conclude to have always before thy eyes this great. pattern of love, that thou mayst learn from him, how thou art to love both thy God, and thy neighbour.

N.B. As the festivals of St. George, of St. Philip, and St. James, and of the Finding of the Crofs, ufually fall between Easter and Ascension; we shall set down in this place the meditations, that are to be read on those days.

#### April 23.

#### On St. GEORGE.

CONSIDER first, that we know little more of the particulars of St. George's life, but that he was a Christian soldier, an illustrious martyr, and a glorious Saint. He was a foldier; we all ought to be foldiers of Christ. In our baptism, we have declared a perpetual war, with the world, with the flesh, and with the devil, as the mortal enemies of our great king, the king of kings, Jesus Christ; the mortal enemies of our true country, the heavenly Jerusalem; and the mortal enemies of our own dear fouls: we have lifted ourselves soldiers, in our confirmation, under the royal standard of the cross of Christ; and have obliged ourselves to bear him perpetual allegiance, and fidelity. But have we fulfilled these engagements? Have we behaved ourselves as becomes the soldiers of Christ? Have we stood to our colours? Have we fought manfully the battles of our Lord? Or have we not rather deserted the cause? Have we not been rebels to our true king? Have we not changed fides, and preferred the following the standard of Satan, before that of Jesus Christ? O be confounded at your past difloyalties; and, now at least, return to your allegiance.

Confider 2dly, that St. George was a martyr: that is, a witness to the divinity of Christ, and to the truth of his doctrine; by choosing rather to lay down his de Woled . Hough of ton Dad but

life, by the worst of torments, than to renounce Jesus Christ, and his Gospel. We are all obliged to be witnesses also to Jesus Christ, and to his Gospel, both by our profession, and by our lives. We are all obliged to be in a constant disposition, of suffering death itself, rather than renounce our allegiance to Christ, by wilful sin. We must all make our way to heaven, through many tribulations, and persecutions, in one shape, or other; and so far are we all obliged to be martyrs. But alas! how far are we from the dispositions of the martyrs, who suffered chearfully all kind of torments for the love of Christ; when we are so unwilling to suffer the least contradiction to our humour, or to part with any of our pleasures for the love of him; and are quickly overcome with every slight temptation?

Confider 3dly, that St. George, though living in the world, in a condition of life, which one would think most opposite to fanctity, was, nevertheless, a glorious Saint. To teach us that fanctity is confiftent with every lawful calling: and that, if we are not Saints, the fault is not in the station of life, in which Providence has placed us; but in our not corresponding with those graces, which God daily offers us, to fanctify us in our calling. 'Tis the love of God, and of our neighbours, that makes Saints; and the more perfect this love is, the more perfect Saints. As then no lawful calling excludes the love, either of God, or of our neighbours; fo no lawful calling can hinder us from being even eminent Saints; if we are truly defirous of The foldier that loves God better, is a greater Saint, than the monk, that loves him lefs.

Conclude to aim, with all thy power, at this heavenly love, as St. George did; and he that crowned St. George will also crown thee: the best way to hell nour the Saints of God; is to love, and to imitate in

them, that which made them Saints.

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on St. Philip, and St. James tong wo

CONSIDER first, that St. Philip, and St. James, were both disciples of Christ, train'd up in his heavenly school. In quality of Christians, we ought all to be fuch, as the very name of a Christian fignifies a disciple, that is, a scholar, and follower of Jesus Christ. They were both called by Christ, and readily left all things. elfe to follow him: and, from that time, inseparably adhered to him. How often have we also been called by him; by his interiour graces? But have we ever yet followed him in earnest? Have we ever yet seriously renounced the love of the world; and every tie, that offered to keep us from him? Have we as yet ever stuck to him, so as to be his constant attendants? They were both chosen by Christ to be of the number of the twelve apostles: they were both zealous preachers of the faith; and, after gaining innumerable fouls to God, they both fealed their doctrine with their blood. Happy we, if by our words, or works, we can also be inflrumental in gaining fouls to God! Happy we, if we might fuffer, or even lay down our lives, for fo good a cause.

Consider 2dly, that St. Philip had no sooner found Christ, but he was willing to make his friend Nathanael partaker of the same happiness; and therefore brought him also to Christ. This was friendship in deed: this was true charity, to take his friend with him to Christ. Alas! how many now a days engage their friends in a partnership of their errors and vices! How many lead them with them to their criminal diversions, or otherwise bring them into sin! But how see have the charity to carry them effectually to Christ? How sew labour to reclaim them from the errors of their ways; and from the broad road, in which they are walking? How sew suggest to their friends, how they may find Christ, by a spiritual re-

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treat, by a good general confession; by the daily practice of meditation &c.! This would be friendship indeed.

Confider 3dly, that St. James was remarkable for the great austerity of his life, and for his continual prayer. Do we desire to come to a share in his heavenly glory? The mortification of our own humours, and paffions; frequent voluntary felf-denials, and a spirit of penance for our fins; joined with constant and fervent prayer, will bring us effectually to his company. We are told that, by reason of the great fanctity of his life, he alone was allowed to enter into the Sancta Sanctorum, or the inward fanctuary of the tem-But what was a much greater advantage to him, was that he was allowed to enter into the true fanctuary of God, in his own interiour, as often as he pleased, and there to find him all alone, and to converse, as familiarly with him as he pleased, by the means of mental prayer. This kind of entring into the fanctuary, God is both willing and defirous to allow to us all: and 'tis the practice of this, is the fecurest way to introduce us hereafter into his eternal fanctuary.

Conclude to honour, and to imitate, these blessed Saints, in such manner, during thy mortal pilgrimage, that they may receive thee one day into the everlasting

manfions of blifs.

# May 3. or old mid higher

#### On the finding of the Cross.

CONSIDER first, that on this day, the church of God, to honour the passion of Christ, celebrates the yearly memorial of the finding of the Cross, that facred instrument of our redemption, sanctified by the blood of the Son of God. This holy tree of life, had lain long deep buried in the earth; and a ftatue of Venus, had been erected by the infidels over the place; when the pious empress St. Helen, was inspired to feek

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after it; and at length happily discovered it, together with the title that had been fastened to it; and the nails with which our Lord had been pierced. This discovery of the cross of Christ was followed by illustrious miracles, to the greater glory of his name, who had humbled himself to the death of the cross for our redemption. Give thanks, Christians, for this miraculous finding of the cross of your Redeemer. Turn this day your devotion towards the triumphs of his sacred passion; it was by the cross he was listed up from the earth; and beginning his reign from that tree, he drew all things to himself. O beg of him now, by all his mercy, to

draw at least your poor hearts to him!

Consider 2dly, the lessons we are to learn, by occasion of this festival: especially the dispositions we ought to be in, with regard to the cross. If we have not the courage to feek it, like St. Helen; at least we ought to receive it, when, without our feeking, it comes to us from the hand of Providence; and to lay it upon our shoulders in order to follow him, who redeemed us by the cross. O! if we did but know the treasures of grace, and of comfort here, and of heavenly glory hereafter, which are laid up for us in the cross; we should not only fubmit to it with patience, but embrace it with joy, as the inexhauftible fource of all good, both for time and eternity. Christians, affure yourselves there is no going to heaven, without a cross upon your shoulders. We must suffer with Christ, before we can reign with him.

Consider 3dly, that the cross is the school of all Christian virtues. As our Lord was pleased to give us most excellent lessons of them all, from bis cross: so he gives us the means and opportunity of exercising them all, in the carriage of our crosses, which he allots us. Here we learn to imitate his perfect conformity to the will of his Father: here we learn to practise his humility, by humbling ourselves under the hand of God: here we learn the practice of his meekness, his patience, his charity for his enemies, and his obedience unto death; and (that which is hardest of all for us to attain to his prefer-

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ring in practice, the poverty, pain, and ignominy of the cross, before all the riches, pleasures and honours of this world. O blessed school, in which we learn such

heavenly lessons!

Conclude, if thou wouldst be a true disciple of Jesus Christ, not to sly from the cross, but to take it up willingly, wheresoever thou findest it, and to follow him. O never be of the number of those unhappy Christians, whom the Apostle laments, as enemies of the cross of Christ: who, by indulging their passions and lusts, seek to bury the cross under the statue of Venus.

# Friday after the Octave of the Ascension.

On preparing the foul for the Holy Ghoft.

ONSIDER first, that when we celebrate the Christian folemnities, we ought not only to honour the mysteries we commemorate, and give praise and glory to the Author of all good, for his benefits to his church; but also to enter into the spirit of the solemnity, by aiming, as much as possible, at the dispositions of foul, which are fuitable to the mysteries we celebrate. And thus when we are preparing to keep the folemn feast of Pentecost, the day when the Holy Ghost came down upon the first Christians, it ought to be the great subject of our devotion, to prepare our souls for the Holy Ghost; that so we may be also favoured with his vifit, at this holy time; and may plentifully partake of his gifts and graces. O my foul, do thou afpire after this happiness, (the greatest of any thou canst enjoy on this fide of eternity) to have the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of the living God, to come to thee, to take full possesfion of thy interiour; and to abide for ever with thee! O spare no pains in preparing a proper lodging for him.

Consider 2dly, how the Apostles prepared themselves for the Holy Ghost, Asts i. 14. They were persevering, saith the Scripture, with one mind in prayer. And Luke

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xxiv. 53. They were always in the temple, praising and bleffing God. They prepared their fouls for this heavenly gueft, by a spiritual exercice of ten days: they spent the whole time, from the Ascension of our Lord till Whitfunday, in recollection and prayer, Retired, as much as might be, from the hurry and distractions of a buly noify world, they attended in silence, to God and their fouls. They were always at prayer in the temple of God: and, by that means, they prepared their fouls to be the temple of God. Happy they that endeavour to make the like preparation! Happy they that make it their practice to prepare themselves, every year, at this time, for the coming of the Holy Ghoft, by a spiritual retreat of some days. If thy circumstances, O my foul, will not allow thee this retirement and folitude; therein to breath the purer air of devotion, and to aspire, in a more suitable manner, after the coming of the Spirit of God; at least wish for this happiness: and, if thou canst do nothing more; at least, in the midst of all thy other employments, call in thy thoughts, as often as thou canst, into thy closet within: and there entertain thyfelf with thy God. Nothing will contribute more effectually to fix the Holy Ghoft in thy foul, than this practice of aiming at an inward recollection, in the midft of all thy works.

Consider 3dly, that the great means to bring the Holy Ghost into our souls, is to invite him thither by ardent desires, and servent prayer. Thus the Apostles obtained him: and the word of God, in many places, assures us, that this is the way for our obtaining all good: that our heavenly Father will give his good Spirit to all that ask him, Luke xi. 13: and that an ardent desire, a perfect hunger and thirst after this heavenly Spirit, the fountain of all justice, is the means to be filled both with him, and his gifts. I wished, says the wise man. Wishom vii. 7. and understanding was given me: and called upon God, and the spirit of wishom came upon me to my soul, see thou seek him in this manner, by serven desires and prayer; but let it be with thy whole heart. In sinding him thou wilt find all good: for he is the ever

flowing fource of all good: without him thou, art nothing but mifery and fin. O come, divine Spirit, to my foul, that longs after thee; and bring with thee all thy heavenly treasures. O do thou prepare thyself a proper lodging in my heart; and then take full possession of it, for time and eternity.

Conclude to spare no pains, in using all means in thy power, to engage this divine spirit to come to visit thee, and to take up his abode with thee: frequently invite him with the veni fancte spiritus, &c. a hymn that he himself has inspired. He willingly comes to those, that

fincerely and heartily invite him.

#### Whitfun-Eve.

On the dispositions necessary for receiving the Holy Ghost.

ONSIDER first, that the soul, which desires to receive the Holy Ghost, must prepare a clean lodging, to entertain him in: that is, a conscience and heart pure and clear from wilful fin. If any person of distinction were to honour us with a vifit, and to take up a lodging with us, we should certainly take care to have our house clean; and to remove from the apartment, defigned for him, whatfoever might offend his eyes: how much more, when we pretend to the honour and happiness, of having the Spirit of God to abide with us, and in us; ought we to take care to have our inward house clean, and to remove from thence, by the virtue, and facrament of penance, the filth of fin, infinitely odious in his eyes? Alas! all the while the foul is under the guilt of mortal fin, not removed by a ferious repentance and conversion to God; she is spiritually posfeffed by Satan: she is become a den of thieves; and carries as many devils about with her as there are unruly passions, to which she is enslaved. And can she expect a vifit from the Holy Ghost, without first ridding herself of such company? No: the Spirit of God can never refide in the same lodging with fin and Satan.

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Confider 2dly, those words of the wife man, Wifdom 1. 4, 5. Wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to fins. For the boly Spirit of difcipline will flee from the deceitful. And learn from henge, what fins have a more particular opposition to the visits of the Spirit of God; that, by the contrary dispositions, thou mayst prepare thy foul for him. He is the spirit of love, union, peace, and charity; and, therefore, can never enter into a malicious foul. He is the spirit of purity, and therefore, cannot dwell in a body subject to carnal fins. He is the spirit of fincerity and truth; and, therefore will flee from all deceitful fouls, that is, from all double dealers and hypocrites, that feek him not in fimplicity of heart. Banish then far from thee all uncharitable animolities and rancour against thy neighbour; all wantonness and impurity; and all deceit and double dealings; if thou hopeft to have any share in the Spirit of God, was at an page a state and

Confider 3dly, that there is also an infinite opposition between the spirit of the world, and the Spirit of God: they cannot both reside in the same breast. We have received, fays the Apostle, 2 Cor. ii. 12. not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit that is of God. The Paraclete, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, faith our Lord, John xiv. 17. For as the love of the world, and its friendship, is the great enemy of the love of God, James iv. 4. and I John ii. 15. So the spirit of the world is the great adversary of the Spirit of God. The spirit of the world, is a spirit of pride and vanity; it is felfish; it is fond of mammon, the god of this world, 2 Cor. iv. 5. and of fenfual pleasures, even to idolatry : the spirit of the world is a spirit of dissipation; ever forgetful of God and eternity; and full of diforderly affections to empty, vain, and perishable toys. And what room then can there be for the Spirit of God in such a foul? No: the Spirit of God will not come any where, if he is not allowed to be supreme Lord and Master there. He will not admit of fuch worldly idols in his temple. lo , wal wan, adv , was aski no ...

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Conclude, if thou wouldst effectually invite the Holy Chaft, to take up his refidence in thy foul, to cleanfe the heart thou defignest for him, not only from all wilful fin, and affection to fin; but also from loving the world, and the things of the world; and from every love or affection, that shall dare prefume to claim any part of thy heart; fo as to hinder thee from giving it all to him. to and the clock of the boar be er and d male and Jude , shall in the

#### Whitfunday.

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On the coming down of the Holy Ghoft.

CONSIDER first, that, on the feast of Pentecost, when the disciples were all affembled together, suddenly there came a found from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming ; and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues, as it were of fire and it fat upon every one of them; and they were all filed with the Holy Ghoft, and they began to speak with diverse tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak, Acts ii. 2, 3, 4. Thus they received the promised Comforter, with all his gifts and graces. Thus were they quite changed into other men. Weak and cowardly as they were before, they are now on a fudden couragious and perfect. They begin boldly to preach and to publish the faith and law of their crucified Lord; and bring thousands to embrace it. O heavenly Spirit how wonderful are thy operations ! O when wilt thou work the like change in my foul! Christians, praise and bless your God, for sending down, in this manner, his holy Spirit upon his church; and for all the wonders that he wrought in the first establishment of it. The Ifraelites observed the solemnity of Pentecost, as one of the three principal feasts of the year; because, on that day, the old law was published from mount Sinai, in thunder and lightning; how much more ought Christians religiously to observe this folemnity, because, on this day, the new law, of grace of and love, was published on mount Sion, by the coming in down

down of the Holy Ghoft, in tongues of fired O I far more fweet and amiable flames I do I do I do

Confider 2dly, that the Holy Ghoft came down up on the Apostles, in the shape of tongues, to fignify that he came to make them fit preachers of his word; and to endow them with the gift of tongues, accompanied with heavenly wisdom, and understanding, of the mysteries of God, and all the Gospel truths; to the end that they might be enabled to teach and publish, throughout the whole world, the faith and law of Christ. And these tongues were of fire, to fignify how this divine Spirit fets those souls on fire, in which he abides; enflaming them with divine love; consuming the dross of their earthly affections; putting them in a continual motion of earnest desires and endeavours, to go forward from virtue to virtue, as fire is always in motion; and carrying them upwards towards the God of gods in his heavenly Sion; as the flame is always afcending upwards towards its element. O bleffed fire, when hall I partake of thy facred flames? O come and take possession of my heart; confume all these bonds that tie it to the earth; and carry it up with thee, towards the heavenly furnace, from whence thou comeft. Sweet Jesus, thou haft faid, Luke xii. 49, I am come to cast fire on the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled? O cast this fire into my foul, that it may be kindled there!

Consider 3dly, that the coming of the Holy Ghost was not promised only to the Apostles, or to the first Christians; nor confined to the primitive ages: but was designed for a blessing, to be entailed on the people of God, throughout all ages. I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete (or comforter) that he may abide with you for ever, the Spirit of truth, St. John xiv. 16, 17. He was promised to be forever with the pastors of God's church, to guide them into all truth in teaching God's people; and to be forever with the sheep of Christ, to guide them into all truth, in their belief and life; and to be the source of all grace to their souls: Wherefore, though we are not now to look for his wished coming down any more in tongues of fire;

we are hevertheless entitled, if we sincerely seek and sue to him, to expect a share in his invisible graces and communications; and to aspire to the honour and happiness of being made his temples. Christians, what a happiness indeed to have the Spirit of God in us! This we must all aim at, with our whole power; this is the great devotion of this holy time; this we must pray for at all times.

Conclude with this humble address of the church to the divine Spirit: Come Holy Ghost, fill the hearts of thy faithful; and kindle in them the fire of thy love: or that other of the sacred hymn, Come, O Spirit our Creator, vifit these souls of thine; and fill with thy heavenly grace the breasts which thou hast made for thyself. Frequently repeat these or the like invitations: and trust in the infinite goodness of him, who delights to be with the children of men, that he will come to thee, and be thy guest.

# Whitfun-Monday.

On the happiness of having the Holy Ghost in the soul.

ONSIDER first, how happy a guest the foul entertains, when the has in her the Holy Ghoff. He is called in Scripture the Paraclete (a name that fignifies both comforter and folicitor) from the confolations and graces he imparts to the foul, to sweeten all her croffes and labours, in her mortal pilgrimage, and to help her to overcome all difficulties and oppolitions: and from his foliciting for her, by the spirit of prayer, which he inspires, teaching her to pray; and as it were praying with her, and in her. He is called, by excellence, the gift of the most High: as being the greatest gift that God can give: for what can he give greater than himself? A gift, comprizing all other gifts. He is called the living fountain; or the fountain of living water, fpringing up to everlasting life, vefreshing the inward man, asswaging the heat of concupifcence,

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cupicence, extinguishing all thirst after the things of this world, and watering the soul with a never-failing stream of grace. He is called a fire, from the bright stames of love, with which he enslames the soul. And he is called the unction of the soul, from sweetly disfusing himself through all the soul, and giving strength and vigour to it. O what can be wanting to a soul, that entertains such a guest as this! Does she not, in some measure, anticipate the joys of heaven; having within her the King of heaven, with all his

graces.

Confider 2dly, the happy fruits, which the prefence of the Holy Ghost produces in the soul, as they are reckoned up by St. Paul, Gal. v. 22, 23. 1. Charity, or the love of God, for his own infinite goodness sake; and the love of every neighbour in God, and for God: a fruit so remarkable in the first Christians, upon their receiving the Holy Ghost, that, through their love of God, they had all but one heart, and one foul. Acts. iv. 32. 2. Joy from the testimony of a good conscience; and from the sense of the presence of this divine guest, and the experience of his sweetness. 3. Peace with God, with our neighbours, and with ourselves: a seace not granted to the wicked. 4. Patience in supporting crosses. and advertities; which this heavenly Spirit makes light and easy. 5. Benignity, or kindness, in relieving the distressed. 6. Goodness, or a willingness to impart all that is good to every neighbour. 7. Longanimity, or long-fuffering, and perseverance, without being wearied out with labour, in overcoming evil with good. 8. Mildness in restraining wrath, and bearing injuries. q. Faith, or fidelity, to all our engagements, both to God, and our neighbours. 10. Modefly, or moderation in all things, regulating every motion both of foul and body. II. Continency, or temperance, in restaining all irregular inclinations; and, 12. Chaffity, or purity, in keeping both foul and body from the defilements of luft. O what happy fruits are thefe O how happy is that foul in which the VOLL Spirit

Spirit of God produces all these fruits! O my soul, bring in this heavenly spirit into thy inward house, and entertain him there, and all these fruits will be thine.

Confider 3dly, that, as nothing can be more happy, than to have the Holy Ghoft in the foul; fo nothing can be more miserable, than to be without this heavenly guest. Where the Spirit of God is not, there Satan is. Alas ! can there be a greater mifery than to be poffessed by Satan. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, fays the Apostle, Rom. viii. 9, he is none of bis. If he be none of his, whose then must he be? Or what share can he have in Christ, or his kingdom? Oh! how true is that which the church fings at this time, in her address to this divine Spirit, sine tuo numine, ni il est in homine, nibil est innoxium. That, without his deity, there is nothing in man, there is nothing that is innocent. O ! dread then the mifery of being without him: and flee from all those evils that may drive him away from thee.

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Conclude to neglect nothing that, is in thy power, by which thou may it procure to thy foul the happiness of being the living temple of the living God; and of having the Holy Ghost there, not as a visiter only, but, as taking up his abode in thee, both for time

and eternity.

## Whitfun-Tuefday.

#### On the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

CONSIDER first, what precious gifts the Spirit of God brings with him, wherever he comes; and what treasures he imparts to the soul, in which he takes up his abode. The prophet reckons up seven most admirable gifts of this holy Spirit, Isai. xi. 2, 3. when he stiles him the Spirit of wisdom, and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel, and of fortitude, the Spirit of knowledge, and of godliness, and he Spirit of the sear of the Lord. O how precious indeed, how

how admirable are these gifts! O how rich is that foul? which, by the coming of the Holy Ghoft, is put in possession of these treasures! But what is this wisdom that the Holy Ghost imparts? Not the wisdom of this world, which is downright folly, in the fight of God; because it looks no farther than earthly toys, and contriving for the transitory enjoyments of this world; whilft it forgets God and eternity. Not the wisdom of the philosophers; who busy themselves in fludying the courses of the stars, and the secrets of nature; and neglect to feek truth in its fountain: because they don't seriously apply themselves to know God, and their own interiour. But that wisdom, which alone deserves this glorious name, which confifts in the knowledge and love of God: which tends continually to him: and which feeks and finds him in

all things. our haydard had shown as no way part is

Confider 2dly, how precious also are those other gifts, which the Spirit of God communicates to the foul. The gift of understanding, which opens the eyes of the foul to the light of God; and fets the truths of God in their proper light: which clearly discovers to the foul the shortness and vanity of all temporal honours, riches, and pleasures; and convinceth her that nothing is truly great, or worthy of her affection, but that which is eternal By the help of this light. the end of our creation, the dignity of an immortal foul, the nature of our mortal pilgrimage, the fc... last things, and other Christian truths, fink deep into the foul, and have a wonderful influence upon the whole conduct of our lives. But then, as we are strangers and travellers here below, and are obliged to make the best of our way towards our true country, through the midst of difficulties and dangers; and with infinite opposition from strong and subtle enemies; the Spirit of God comes into our affiftance, with two other admirable gifts: viz. the gift of counsel, to shew us our way; to discover to us the snares and artifices of our enemies; and to guide us fafe through all dangers; and the gift of fortitude, or heavenly courage, Ee2

and strength, to animate us to encounter all opposition, from the world, the sless, and the devil; and to help us to come off with victory in all our conslicts. O how happy is that traveller who has such a guide, such a counseller, such a powerful helper and protector!

Consider 3dly, the rest of the gists, which the Holy Ghost imparts to that soul in which he dwells: viz. the gist of knowledge, to instruct her in every virtue, and every duty; and in every step she is to take in order to God, and a happy eternity. Then the gist of godliness or piety; which makes the soul quite in earnest, and perfectly servent, in the service of God; so that she runs on with vigour, and alacrity, in the ways, of all his divine commandments. And lastly the gift of the sear of the Lord, which the Scripture calls the beginning of wisdom; which restrains the soul from all that may offend God; and makes her fear his displeasure, more than any other evil whatsoever. Can any treasures upon earth be comparable to these?

gifts, the least of which is worth more than all the world can give. How rich then is that foul which enjoys them all, by enjoying the Spirit of God, who is the source of all good, and who alone can impart

fuch excellent gifts.

## Whitsun-Wednesday.

On the means of keeping the Holy Ghost in the foul.

CONSIDER first, that the soul which has been favoured with a visit from the Holy Ghost, if the desires a continuance of that happiness, must take care to entertain him, in a proper manner. For if she takes little or no notice of this heavenly guest; if the quickly turns her back upon him, to attend to every idle and impertinent amusement, that offers itself; if she do not frequently go in, to wait upon him, in

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her inward house; if she love not to converse with him there: The will quickly lofe him; the will drive him away from her. He delights to be with them, that delight to be with him. He expects a correspondence and return of love. And therefore with draws himfelf from fuch fouls as take no care to entertain him, by recollection and love; but choose to give themfelves up to diffipation of thought, and to fquander away that precious time, which they should spend in his company, in following empty phantoms, and roving imaginations. O my foul, is not this too often thy case? Amongst the many thoughts, which fuccessively occupy thy mind, all the day long, how few are there that are any thing to the purpole; how few that are fit to come in, to appear in presence of the Holy Ghost? How then canst thou expect, he will flay with thee, if thou introduceft fuch company as this into his lodging?

Confider 2dly, that as the Spirit of God will not: dwell in a foul, that does not attend on him by recollection of thought: fo neither will he dwell in a foul, that does not serve him, with purity of heart and affection. He will be fole master of the heart, in which he refides: he will allow of no partner there. He is a jealous lover that will bear no rival. A heart, divided in its affections, between the Creator and the creature, excludes the Holy Ghost: he will suffer no division; he claims the whole heart: the bed is too narrow to hold two: he will have all or none. Christians, if then you pretend to the happiness of being temples of the Holy Ghost, you must not admit of any idols in your fouls. Now all diforderly affections are idols, inafmuch as, by them, you prefer the creature before the Creator: and all such affections are disorderly as: captivate your hearts, and take them off from God. Let the object of your love be ever fo innocent in itself, it is no longer innocent when it is loved without a due subordination to the love of God. It beni mid noqu tiew or en og vannen in to ob aft

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away the Spirit of God: who will not dwell but in gractice of thy life? Doft thou I ver

a clean heart.

Confider 2dly, that, in order to keep the Holy Ghost in the foul, so that he may choose to dwell there, as in his temple: we must not only keep this temple clean and undefiled : for if any man violate the temple of God, him will God deftroy, I Cor. iii. 17: but we must also take care, that it be made a boule of prayer; as the house of God should be. We must frequently go into this temple; there to worship this Spirit of truth, in spirit and truth. We must apply and employ all the three powers of the foul, the will, the memory, and the understanding, in frequently attending there upon their God, in the way of mental prayer. In a word, the worship of God should be ever going forward, in this temple of his. This is the true way, to engage him to flay with us, and to make our fouls the place of his rest for ever and ever.

Conclude to make use of all these means to entertain this fovereign guest, and to fix him in your fouls. Give him full pollession of your memory and understanding, by recollection of thought, and attention to his presence: and make him the absolute master of your will, by fimplicity of intention, and purity of heart

and affection; and he will be yours for ever.

# -busemmos bow bit fun-Thur sday on noisula

On the marks of the Holy Ghost's abiding in the the fincere dif-

CONSIDER first, that the furest way to make a judgment, whether the Holy Ghost abides in the foul, or no; is by his fruits. The Spirit of God never lies idle: he is a fire that is always active; always in motion; always tending upwards. If we find nothing of this in our fouls, we have reason to fear he is not there. His fruits are charity, joy, peace, patience, Scc. If we have none of these fruits, he is not with us. My foul, what is thy faith? Is it firm? Is it lively? Or

practice of thy life? Dost thou live by faith? What is thy hope? What is thy sense of the things of eternity? What is thy esteem of spiritual things? What is thy devotion? What is thy love for God, and thy neighbour? What is thy desire of making a daily progress in the way of God? By examining thyself upon these heads, it will be easy to judge whether the Holy Ghost be with thee, or no. But especially, there is no surer mark of this divine Spirit abiding in the soul, than a constant and servent desire of loving God daily more and more; and of ever knowing and doing his holy will in all things. Dost thou find in thyself this earnest desire of loving and pleasing God? If so, the Spirit of God cannot be far from thee.

Confider 2dly, that as there is an infinite oppositions between the Spirit of God, and wilful fin; fo one of the furest marks of the Holy Ghost's residing in the soul, is a fettled constant abhorrence of wilful fin; with a fixt determination of the foul, never to admit, for the future, any fuch fin, upon any confideration whatfoever, My foul, what is thy disposition in this regard? Art thou fully determined to be ever faithful and loyal to thy God, both in life and death? Doft thou refolutely renounce Satan, and all his works, both for the prefent time, and forever? Is it thy constant and settled refolution, never to transgress the holy law and commandments of God, for any worldly honour, interest, or pleafure; for any respect of person; for any fear or love; for any thing that the world can give, or take away; or for any other confideration? If this be thy fincere difpolition and determination, the Holy Ghost is with thee: but if thou art not thus determined, there is no room for him in thy foul, because Satan is there, on to lust

he convinces the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment, John xvi. 8. He convinces the soul of sin, inasmuch as he gives to the soul, which he enlightens with his presence, a sense of the enormity of sin, and of the multitude and greatness of her own sins in particu-

lar; a horrour for that hellish monster; and a defire of abolishing it by penance. He discovers also many stains, where the foul before perceived none; and humbles her exceedingly, by the conviction of her manifold guilt. My foul dost thou experience in thyself this conviction of fin? The Holy Ghost by his coming convinces also the soul of the justice of Christ, and of his heavenly law; of the beauty of virtue and holiness; and of the pleasure and happiness, that is found in serving God in earnest. Art thou, my foul, practically convinced of all this? Dost thou practically prefer this manna of heaven, before the flesh-pots of Egypt? Again, the Holy Ghost, hy his coming, convinces the foul of the wrong judgment the has hitherto made, in following the world, and the prince of this world, who is already judged, and condemned; and of the right judgment she ought to make of all things; in order to escape that judgment, which God will otherwise one day make of her. Dost thou, my foul, find in thee this conviction of judgment? Is thy judgment rectified by the Holy Ghost, in regard to truth and falshood, verity and vanity, time and eternity? Dost thou not still follow, by a perverse judgment, the prince of this world, rather than Jesus Christ: the maxims of worldlings, who are liars in their balances; rather than the practice of the Saints, who weigh all things in the scales of the fanctuary? Will thy way of judging be able to frand the test of the last great trial?

Conclude to examine well, by such marks as these, whether the Spirit of God be with thee, or no. If thousemest to find in thyself these marks of his presence; return him humble thanks: but be not too secure, lest the artifices of thy self-love should deceive thee; or thy pride should drive him away from thee. But if thou discoverest not in thyself these marks of his being with thee; bewail thy misery; and give thyself no rest; till, by penitential tears, and servent prayer, and all the other means, by which the Holy Ghost is to be invited into the soul, thou hast grounds to hope, that he is returned

to thee.

endicate the love uppeare of all his except the world, engage outletves to right his harries, against the world,

### Whitfun-Friday.

On the facrament of confirmation.

CONSIDER first, that confirmation is a facrament, by which the faithful, if duly disposed, receive the Holy Ghost, together with all his gifts and graces; in order to make them flrong and perfect Christians. The Apostles were confirmed, in a wonderful manner, by the Holy Ghost's coming down visibly upon them, on Whitfunday: but the rest of the faithful, were to be confirmed by their ministry, and by that of their successors, the bishops of God's church; receiving the Holy Ghost by the imposition of their hands, and prayer, Acts viii. 15, 17, 18. and chap. xix. 6. Give thanks to our Lord, for this facred inflitution, by means of which he perpetuates in his church, the mission of his Holy Spirit, and the communication of his graces. What a dignity, what a happiness, to receive the Holy Ghost, the Lord of heaven and earth, and the inexhaustible source of all grace! Wherefoever he comes, he brings with him all his treasures; and he is infinitely liberal, in imparting them to all fuch fouls, as are disposed to receive them. How much then are they their own enemies, who either neglect this great means of receiving the Holy Ghost; or else come to it, without due dispositions; and so lose the benefit of it; and even pervert it to their own damnation.

Consider 2dly, that the proper and peculiar grace of the sacrament of confirmation is a heavenly fortitude; that is to say, a spiritual strength, valour, and courage, in order to maintain the cause of God and our souls, against the visible and invisible enemies of our faith. By this sacrament we are made soldiers of Christ: Here we give in our names to be listed in the service of this great king: we put ourselves under his banner: we receive the sacred mark of his cross on our foreheads; his cross, which is the royal standard of all his troops: here we engage ourselves to sight his battles, against the world,

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the flesh, and the devil; and we are equipped out, with proper arms for this warfare. O how glorious is this title of a soldier of Christ! How happy this service! What have we to apprehend, sollowing Christ for our captain; and having his holy Spirit with us, to guide, strengthen, encourage, and defend us? But O the noble pay, which this great king gives to his soldiers! For he gives them nothing less than himself, and that for eternity. Be thou faithful until death, saith he, and I will

give thee the crown of life, Apocal. ii. 10.

Confider 3dly, that, in the facrament of confirmation, the foul is, in a particular manner, dedicated and confecrated to God, by the unction of his holy Spirit; at the fame time as the forehead is anointed with the holy Chrism. This Chrism is a compound of oil, and balm of Gilead, folemply confecrated by the bishops of God's church, on Maundy Thursday; kept in the church with the utmost reverence; and only used in the confecration of fuch things as are more folemnly dedicated to God, or more nearly deputed to his divine fervice. So that the using of this holy oil in confirmation, is to give us to understand, that, by this facrament, we also are solemnly dedicated, sanctified, and confecrated to God; to be the temples of his Spirit. Inasmuch as this visible unction, and consecration of the body, is the outward fign of the invilible unction, and confecration of the foul, by the Spirit of God; as all the facraments are outward figns of inward grace. Christians, what are your thoughts of this confecration, which your fouls have received? Have you hitherto confidered yourselves, as a people particularly dedicated to God, and fanctified by the unction of his Spirit? Have you reflected, that you have been fanctified, with the like confectation, to that with which the altars, and temples of God, are folemnly dedicated to his fervice ?: Remember this, at least, for the future; and let your lives shew forth, that you are indeed the living temples of the living God.

Conclude to fet a high value upon the grace of your confirmation; and to live up to the glorious characters

you

you there received. See you behave, in every respect, as becomes strong and perfect Christians, and soldiers of Christ. Beware of receiving so great a grace in vain.

### Whitsun-Saturday.

On the obligations of our confirmation.

ONSIDER first, that confirmation is one of those three facraments, which imprint a character, or spiritual mark, in the foul. The nature of this character of confirmation is fuch, as to carry with it a certain dedication of the foul to the service of God, in the quality of his foldier: as the character of baptism marks us out for the people of God; and the character of Holy Orders for the ministers of God. Hence it is, that these three facraments, after they have been once received, cannot be received any more; because the character which they leave in the foul, which is the mark of the confecration of the foul to God, can never be loft, and therefore can never be repeated. But then these three facraments carry also with them a strict obligation, of living up to this character, and to this confectation, which they impart to the foul : and thus this facrament of confirmation in particular, obliges us to observe the whole discipline, of the soldiers of Jesus Christ; to stand to our colours; to fight manfully the battles of our Lord; and rather to die than to change fides, or to go over to the enemy, by any wilful fin. This is the allegiance we owe to Christ, in quality of his soldiers: this we oblige ourselves to, when we receive the character of confirmation.

Consider zdly, that the soldiers of this world profess a strict regard, to all the laws of their calling, and to the orders of their officers. They expose themsolves to all kind of labours and dangers, in marches, in sieges, and in battles. They endure heats and colds, and all the inclemency of the weather, and the seasons; they suffer hunger and thirst, watchings, and all other hardships, to which their station of life exposes them?

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What leffons are here for Christians, who, by the factament of confirmation, have enlisted themselves soldiers of Christ? How much more ought they to embrace with courage, all the labours and sufferings, to which their spiritual warfare exposes them? Especially as they sight under the banner of so great a king; in his prefence and company; and for so great a reward. But alas the soldiers of this world will. I fear, one day rise up in judgment, and condemn us, for having done and suffered so little in the warfare of Christ, in comparison with what they have done and suffered in the warfare of the world!

to Confider adly, that whatfoever is once dedicated and confecrated to God, ought to continue forever dedicated and confecrated to his divine fervice. And it is no lefs a crime than facriledge, to pervert any thing, dedicated to him, to profane uses. Therefore the foul, which, by the facrament of confirmation, has been dedicated, fanctified, and confecrated to God; and which always carries about with her the mark of this confecration, is strictly obliged thereby to be ever his; to be ever faithful; and to be ever holy; as a thing dedicated to his divine fervice, both in quality of his foldier, and of his temple. O remember Christians, that the character, which the foul receives in this facrament, can never be effaced, neither in this world, nor in the world to come : that, if we live up to the obligations of it, it will shine most brightly in our fouls to eternity, and be no small addition to our everlasting glory and happiness: but if we should defile and profane this facred mark of Christ, by a finful life; and after these solemn engagements, and the consecration of our fouls to him, should become rebels and deferters that this same mark would appear in judgment again us; it would condemn us at the bar of divine juffice; would continue with us forever, as a mark of diffrace a perpetual reproach among the damned; and an additional torture and gripe to the foul, for having one for faithed the celebrating the orter ecces fellivale,

been dedicated to God; and having been formad, for wretched, for wicked, as to apostatize from him.

Conclude to bear always in mind, the facted character of thy confirmation, as well as that of thy bap. tifm; that thou may'ft live up to the obligations of them both. Be not terrified at the prospect of the conflicts thou must sustain; for the crosses and hardships, thou wilt have to go thro' in this warfare ; the grace of God, and his peace, which surpasseth all understanding, Phil. iv. 7, will support thee, and never suffer thee to be tempted above thy ftrength, I Cor. x. 13. but bring thee off with comfort and victory: In token of which, the bishop, when he confirmed thee, gave thee a blow on the cheek, as a declaration of the adverfities thou wast to sustain; but at the same time gave thee God's peace, that thou mightst understand, that God would be with thee, in them all, and never leave thee.

# Trinity-Sunday. On the bleffed Trinity.

CONSIDER first, that, on this day, the church sets before the eyes of our fouls, this principal mystery of the Christian faith; by which we believe one eternal God, in three several persons: which we call the mystery of the blessed Trinity; or of three in one; three persons in one God. This is the great object of the Christian's worship. This we ought to adore every day, and every hour. Every Sunday in the year might be called Trinity-Sunday; because every Sunday is set alide for the worship of this adorable Trinity, our Lord, and our God. Yea, all our time belongs to him: and the great facrifice, that is offered daily, on millions of altars, throughout the world, is principally defigned to give fovereign adoration, homage, praife, and glory, to the most holy Trinity. But then this day is more particularly appointed by the church, (which has now just finished the celebrating the other great festivals, VOL. I.

relating to the mysteries of our redemption, and sanctification, wrought by the three divine persons,) in order to honour, in a more particular manner, this chiefest mystery of our religion. Come then, my soul, and come all ye Christian souls with me, this day: and let us bew down all our powers, to adore this incomprehensible mystery. The more 'tis above our reach, the more worthy it is, both of our faith and veneration.

Consider 2dly, more in particular, what our faith teaches us, with relation to this mystery. We believe there is but one true and living God, and no more; eternal, incomprehenfible, omnipotent, and infinite in all his attributes, and perfections. In this one God, we believe three distinst persons, of the same substance, and effence, and perfectly equal in age, in power, in wisdom, and in all perfections : the Father, who has no beginning, and proceeds from no one: the Son, who proceeds from the Father, by an eternal and ineffable generation; as his living word, and wildom, the brightness of his glory, and the most perfect image of his person: and the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God, who proceeds eternally from the Father and the We believe that these three are one, by having all three the same Godhead, that is the same divine The Father, is God, the Son is God, the Holy Ghoff is God: And yet they are not three Gods, but one God, one Lord, one Almighty, in three feveral persons. This is the true Christian catholick belief of the mystery of the blessed Trinity, essentially necessary for our eternal falvation. Let us then make frequent acts of faith, concerning this fovereign truth: let us cast down every proud thought, that offers to rebel against it: God himself has taught it; who need Consider 3dly, that 'tis not our saith alone, but our

Consider 3dly, that 'tis not our saith alone, but our lives also, that must render proper homage to this adorable mystery of the eternal Trinity. What will it avail thee to discourse prosoundly of the Trinity, saith a servant of God, if, through want of humility, thou be.

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m ch fig disagreeable to the Trinity? Humility of mind, and heart, is the most agreeable homage that man can pay to this infinite majesty. Heaven is my throne, saith he, Isai, lxvi. 1, 2, and the earth my foot-stool----My hand made all these things--but to whom shall I have respect, but to him that is poor and little, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my words? Learn also from the Epistle of this day, as a part of the homage thou owest to the most sacred Trinity, to adore in silence the depth of the secret counsels and judgments of God, and the wisdom of his unsearchable ways; and, in all events, to give glory to him. For of him, and by him, and in him, are all things: to him be glory forever: Amen, Rom. xi. 36.

Conclude to come daily before the throne of the eternal Trinity, with thy best homage of saith, love, and humility. Adore the almighty power of the Father, the infinite wisdom of the Son, and the incomprehensible goodness, and love, of the Holy Ghost. And give up the three powers of thy soul, and thy wholebeing without referve to be ruled and disposed of, for time and eternity, by this infinite power, wisdom,

and goodness.

## Monday after Trinity-Sunday.

On the figures of the blessed Eucharist. And

figure of the New: and that all the most remarkable events, that are there recorded by the Spirit of God, have relation, in the way of prophetick figures, to Christ, and his church of the New Testament. Thus the redemption, or deliverance of the children of Israel out of the slavery in Egypt, was a figure of the redemption of man by Christ, from the bondage of Satan and sin: and the means that were then ordered, and appointed to be used, as a prepararation for that deliverance, were a figure of what F f 2

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was to be afterwards done by our Redeemer, for the deliverance of all mankind, from a far worfe flavery. Now it was appointed, Exed. xii, that the children of Mrael, the night before their going out of Egypt, Thould, in all their families, offer up an unspotted lamb in facrifice; and that they should sprinkle their doorposts with the blood of the victim, as a fign for the deffroying angel, who flew that night all the first-born of Egypt, to pass over their houses; and that they should eat the flesh, of the lamb, that same night, roasted at the fire, with unleavened bread, and wild lettice; having their loins girt, their shoes on their feet, and their staves in their hands, in readiness to take the journey, which they were immediately to begin, in confequence of the deliverance of that night. See here my foul, this illustrious figure: but now let us come to the application of it.

Consider therefore, 2dly, that this unspotted lamb, first offered in facrifice, and then eaten in a facred and mysterious sign, or sacrament, was a lively sigure of Jefus Chrift, the true Lamb of God, offered up in facrifice for our redemption from fin and hell; with the fprinkling of whole blood, our fouls are rescued from the power of Satan, and from the second death. And whose sacred flesh we are commanded to eat in the divine myfteries, as an earnest of the share we have in him, and his facrifice; as a fovereign means of communicating to our fouls the fruit of our redemption, and all the grace purchased by our Redeemer; as a pledge of our eternal happiness; and as a preparation, and a viaticum, for the great journey we are to make out of this Egypt of the world, to the true land of promise, the land of the living. O my foul, letius adore, praise, and give thanks to our Lord, for these wonders he has wrought in our favour, in these heavenly mysteries. Let us embrace, with all affection this Lamb of God, immolated for our fins; this Christian pasch; this victim of our redemption; this new facrifice of the new covenant, the covenant of life

life and leve Let us frequently approach to these mysteries; but see it be with due dispositions

Consider 3dly, that the paschal lamb was to be eaten with unleavened bread, and wild lettice, to fignify the dispositions of foul, with which we ought to come to the Christian passover. Christ is now our paschal lamb. Therefore, fays the Apostle, I Cor. v. 8, let us feest, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice, and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. So that a purity of intention, uprightness, and fimplicity of heart, and the fincere disposition of a foul, which defires to give herfelf up, without referve. to her Redeemer, are fignified by the unleavened bread. with which the pasch was to be eaten: as the wholesome bitterness of a true repentance, and contrition for our fins, is fignified by the bitter tafte of the wild lettice. And whereas it was also ordered, that, in eating the paschal lamb, they should have their loins girt up, their shoes on their feet, and their staves in their hands: we are to learn from these ceremonies, that, if we would worthily approach to the Lamb of God, in the facred mysteries, we must gird up the loins of our foul, by a resolute restraint of our passions, and lusts; and have our feet, that is, the affections of the foul, shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, Eph. iv. 15; that is, with a readiness of heart to follow, in all things, the rules of the Gospel, as the only way to true peace: and hold our staves in our hands, as pilgrims and travellers, not having any propriety, or lafting dwelling here, but wholly bent on making the best of our way to our true country.

Conclude to frequent henceforward the great Christian passover of the most blessed Eucharist, with the disposition of true Isalites, leaving Egypt, and marching towards the land of promise. Ever consider it as the sacrifice, and sacrament, of your deliverance and redemption, and approach to it with the devotion, which this consideration requires: as the straelites were commanded to solemnize, by the annual devotion of

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the facilities and darrament of the patchal damb, the memory of the received month mortal modern the facramental formation being produced in the facramental formation of the food, nountil ment, the best of the food, nountil ment, the best of the food of the facramental formation of the food of

# Tuesday after Trinity-Sunday.

Of the manna, and the bread of Elias.

ONSIDER first, that the manna, with which God fed the children of Israel, for forty years in the wilderness, from their going out of Egypt, till their entring in to the land of promise, was another prophetick emblem of the true bread of heaven, which we receive in the bleffed Eucharift. He commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, fays the Pfalmift, Ixxvii. 23, 24, 25. And be rained down manna upon them to eat; and gave them the bread of beaven : man did eat the bread of Angels. And yet this miraculous food, formed by Angels, and fent down from the clouds, and therefore called the bread of heaven, and the bread of Angels, was but a figure of that bread of life, which we receive in the bleffed facrament: an illustrious figure indeed, but nothing in comparison with the truth. Moses did not give you bread from heaven, fays our Lord to the Jews, John vi. (for the manna only came down from the clouds) but my Father giveth you the true bread from beaven --- I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, be shall twe for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world .--- As the living Father bath fent me, and I live by the Father : fo be that eateth me, the same also shall live by me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth this bread Shall live forever. verf. 32, 51, 52, 58, 59, Omy foul, fee thou embrace this living, and life-giving, bread. Confider 2dly, that the manna was the food, upon which the people of God lived, for forty years, in the wilderness; but which ceased, as soon as they came through

to eat of the fruits of the land of promife: to give us to understand, that the bread of heaven, which we here receive, veiled under the facramental species, in the bleffed Eucharift, is to be the food, nourishment, ftrength, and life, of our fouls, during our mortal pilgrimage, through the wilderness of this world; till we come to the true land of promise, and there eat of the happy fruits, of that bleffed land of the living, by the beatifick vision and contemplation of the Divinity: and that then all facramental veils shall be removed; and we shall see, and feed, upon life and truth itself, face to face, for all eternity. Christians, if you hope to arrive one day at this happy land of promife, fee you neglect not to gather, for your journey, the manna of heaven, by the frequent and worthy approaching to the bread of life, in the most holy facrament: without this support, you will perish in the wilderness, and never reach your journey's end. But, if you would truly relish this heavenly manna, you must take care not to let your palate be depraved, like the carnal Jews, by an affection to the onions, and fleshpots of Egypt. Didw will be beard tada to stugit a

Consider 3dly, another figure of this heavenly food, in that bearth-cake of the prophet Elias, with which he was fed by an Angel in the wilderness, when he was fleeing from the perfecution of Jezabel : 3 Kings xix. In the strength of which food, he walked forty days, and forty nights, unto the mount of God Horeb. v. 8: Where he was favoured with the vision of the Deity, as far as man is capable of feeing him in this life. Arife, eat, faid the Angel to him v. 7, for thou haft yet a great way to go. All which expresses to us, that retiring from the dangers, and the contagion of a wicked world, as from the impious Jezabel, in worder to make our journey to the mountain of God, the mountain of eternity: we must have recourse to this bread of heaven, for our support in our way; for we have yet a great way to go, being far off from sahat perfection, which is required before we can come nother vision of God; and this barren wilderness, through

through which we are to travel, affording as no proper food for our fullenance in the way, but what we must have from heaven.

Conclude my foul, if thou aspirest after this mountain of God, and the happy vision of him, diligently to procure this bread of life, in the strength of which thou mayst also walk, during the forty days of thy pilgrimage, to that blessed mountain. But remember that this bread was only given in the wilderness, that is, in retirement and solitude: and that the manna was not given, till the people had less Egypt: and leasn from thence, that a spirit of recollection, and a purifying of the heart, from the affections to the Egypt of this world, are the best dispositions for the bread of heaven.

### Wednesday after Trinity-Sunday.

Of other figures of the bleffed Eucharist.

ONSIDER first, that, the facrifice of Melchisedech, Gen. xiv. 18. in bread and wine, was another figure of the facrifice, and facrament, of the body and blood of Christ, in the Eucharist : as Melchisdech himself, and his priesthood, was an illustrious figure of Christ, and his eternal priesthood, as we learn from Pfalm cx. 4. and Hebr. vii. And so likewise, in the law of Moses, all chose sacrifices commonly called peace-offerings, in which both the priest and the people were partakers of the victim, were also figures of Christ sacrificed for us, and received by us. So many ways was the divine majesty pleased, both before the law, and in the law, to shew forth to us, not only the facrifice, in which his Son flould be both our priest and victim; but also the facrament, by which he should communicate his own flesh to us. Learn from hence my foul, what reverence, what devotion, thou owest to our tremendous mystel ries; the very figures of which were fo facred, and to venerable. It was a great crime, if any one that

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was not clean and pure, prefumed to approach to these ancient sacrifices; what purity then is the Christian now obliged to bring with him, when he approaches to the truth, of which these were but shadows?

Confider adly, that God appointed twelve loaves, made of fine flower, to stand always in his temple, before the veil of the fancta fanctorum, or the inward fanctuary; placed there upon a table, made for that purpose, of incorruptible wood, and overlaid with gold: and that the clearest frankincense should be put upon them; that the bread might be for a memorial of the oblation of the Lord, by an everlasting covenant. Levit. xxiv. 5, 6, 7, 8. These loaves, called the holy bread, and the loaves of proposition, or shew-bread, were also a figure of the holy Eucharist. They always stood before the Lord in his temple, as an offering made to him by his people; as a figure of that folemn offering which should be afterwards daily made, under the form of bread, in the church of Christ: the clearest frankincense was put upon them, to denote the pure prayer, and devotion, with which this offering was to be made: And they flood before the veil, with the golden candlestick, and the altar of perfumes; to fignify that the fovereign means to bring our fouls to God, and to introduce us within the veil, into his eternal fanctuary, would be the right use of the bread of life, which we have in the blessed Eucharist; joined with devout prayer; and the lights and graces of the Spirit of God, fignified by the feven branches of the golden candlestick.

Consider 3dly, that the tree of life, planted in the midst of the earthly Paradise, Gen. ii. 9, was also a figure of the bleffed facrament. The fruit of this tree had that excellent property, that if fin had not banished us from that happy abode, we should have been maintained thereby in a constant vigour, strength and health; and so should have never died. O how well does the bleffed Eucharist answer this noble figure! Seeing we here feed upon life itself, in it's very fource; and by frequently and worthily approaching to the maintaining of the vigour, strength, and health, of the foul; that so we may never incur the second death; but may pass from life to life; from the life of grace, to the life of glory; from life concealed under sacramental veils, to life seen and enjoyed, without

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Conclude, from all these ancient types and figures, so noble, and so expressive of the blessed Eucharist, and its fruits, to raise thy thoughts and heart above this earth, and all that is earthly, in the use of this heavenly sacrament. And affure thyself, that this divine mystery, so many ways presigured, both in the law of nature, and in the law of Moses, must need be something far superior to all types and figures.

#### Corpus-Christi day.

On the institution of the blessed Eucharist.

CONSIDER first, how our Lord, having finished the course of his mortal life, when his hour was now come that he should pass out of this world to the Father: having loved his own who were in the world, fays the beloved disciple, John xiii. I, be loved them unto the end: and gave them, in the last stage of his life, the most evident tokens of his boundless love: as well in what he endured, out of pure love for us, in his passion and death; as in the institution of the eucharistick sacrifice and sacrament, at his last fupper, as an admirable legacy of love: in which, and by which, he might not only be always with us, to the end of the world; but might also unite himself to us, in fuch a manner, as that we should abide in him, and he in us. John vi. 57. O how wonderful are the ways of his divine love! How incomprehen fible the riches of his bounty and goodness to us! what could he give us more, than when he gives us himself? What could he do more to testify his affect hatel often crucified thee by my repeated comes? tion for us? Is it possible my foul, we should ever

Confider 2dly, the infinite treasures, which our Lord has bequeathed to us, in the institution of these divine mysteries: which contain an inexhaustible source of divine grace; the living bread, the food, the nounths ment, the strength, and the life of our fouls; the manna of heaven; the tree of life; spirit, truth, and life itself: the remedy of all our evils; the most powerful medicine for all our diseases; the sovereign antidote against the poison of the infernal ferpent; the comfort of our banishment; the support of our pilgrimage; the price of our ransom; the earnest of our eternal falvation; the great facrifice and victim of the New Testament: by means of which we are enabled to give worthy praise, adoration, and homage, to God; to return him acceptable thanks; and to apply daily to our fouls all the fruit of the death and passion of the Son of God; as well for the remisfion of all our fins; as for the obtaining of all good through him, both for time and eternity. In a word, he has bequeathed to us, in these heavenly mysteries, his own facred body and blood, together with his foul and divinity; fo rich a prefent, that heaven can give nothing greater.

Consider 3dly, what could be the motive, that induced our Lord to communicate himself, and all his treasures, to us, in this wonderful manner, by the institution of the blessed, Eucharia! O my soul it was no other but his own pure goodness and love. It was that, by this means he might be always with us; for his delight is to be with the children of men, Prov. viii. 3r. It was that he might unite us to himself, that he might abide in us, and we in him. O who ever heard of such love as this! But what didst thou see in me, dearest Lord, that could claim thy love, and such a love? In me a poor worm of the earth; and what is infinitely worse, a most ungrateful wicked sinner, a traitor to thee, and to thy Father, and who have so often crucisied thee by my repeated crimes?

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tini hav O ye heavens be aftonisht at this prodigy of my Saviour's bounty and love for me; and of my wicked-ness and ingratitude, in not making him a better return! O my soul, let us begin now at least to be wholly his: let nothing henceforward be capable of separating us

any more from this divine lover.

Conclude to be ever thankful for this unspeakable benefit of the institution of the blessed facrament, and sacrifice of the altar. Join now with the church, in celebrating this octave, with an extraordinary devotion, in
acknowledgment of thy Saviour's goodness and love,
which he has shewn to us in these mysteries: and make
the best amends thou art able, by thy diligence in this
devotion, for the many affronts, abuses and sacrileges, to
which thy Saviour has here exposed himself, for the love
of thee.

## Friday within the Octave of Corpus Christi.

On the mysteries contained in the blessed Eucharist.

CONSIDER first, that all the facraments are facred and mysterious signs of divine graces, and of heavenly truths, which lie concealed under these outward appearances, and, through them, are conveyed to our fouls. But that the bleffed Eucharift in particular, as it is the greatest of all the sacraments, contains, more and greater mysteries, than any of the rest. Hereour Lord gives himself to us in quality of our food: that, as fin and death, and all our miseries, came to us originally, by eating of the forbidden fruit; so grace and life, and all our good, should come to us, by eating here of the fruit of the tree of life, which he has commanded us to eat. And he gives himself to us, under the form of bread, as being a form the most expressive to us, both of his real and his mystical body. He is the living bread John vi. 51, 52. And his body has all the qualities of to bread

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food and nourishment of our souls unto life everlasting. Therefore this form of bread is the most proper to express to us the true living bread, which it contains namely, the true and real body of Christ; and its qualities and effects, in being the food, nourishment, strength, and life of our souls: and, at the same time, is also most proper to express to us, the mystical body of Christ, which is his church; and the union of concord and charity, by which all its members, like so many grains of corn, are closely united, as it were in one bread, by means of the holy communion, according to that of St. Paul, 1 Cor. X-17, We being many, are one bread, one

body, all that partake of one bread,

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Confider 2dly, that, in this most holy facrament and facrifice, the death and passion of the Son of God is alfo, in a lively manner, represented to us, and all the mysteries of our redemption are solemnly celebrated: inafmuch as, by the feparate confectation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, the true Lamb of God, who takes away the fins of the world, presents himself to his Father, upon our altars, under the figure of death, that is, under the facramental veris, which represent his body as delivered up, broken and flain for us, and his blood as shed for us. So that here the whole passion and death of Christ, is tolernly acted. as a most facred tragedy, by himself in person: here that death, which is the fountain of all our good, is shewed forth in such manner as not only to be kept up in our remembrance, but also to live in us, and bring forth always in us the fruit of life: here the blood of Christ most powerfully pleads and interceeds for us. Here, in fine, not only the paffion and death, but also the victorious refurrection, and triumphant afcention of our crucified king, are folemnly commemorated. my foul, admire and adore these divine mysteries !

Consider 3dly, that the participation of the body and blood of Christ, under the sacramental veils, is no less mysterious, in the many benefits it ensures to us, with relation to our redemption and salvation. For here we

Vol. I. G g receive

receive an affurance of the share we have in our Redeemer, and in the sacrifice of his cross. Here we are mystically incorporated in him, and are made partakers of his Spirit. Here we are admitted to that blood, which is the seal of the new covenant; importing the remission of our fins, and our reconciliation with God, through the death of his Son; together with an admittance to all graces and blessings through him. Here in fine, we have a most certain pledge of a happy resurrection, and everlasting life, and of an eternal enjoyment, in our blessed country, of him, who thus lovingly gives himself to us, in this place of banishment.

Conclude ever to approach, with all reverence and love, to these mysteries so full of majesty and love. The high priest, in the old testament, was but once a year to enter into the inward sanctuary, called the holy of holies, and then not without diverse purifications and facrifices, and a solemn sast of all Israel: See then, how pure, how holy, thou oughtest to be; who art so often admitted, by the means of this heavenly sacrament, into the sanctuary of the New Testament, that is, to these divine mysteries, sanctified by the presence of Jesus Christ himself, the true Holy of holies, of which that

Tewish fanctuary was but a shadow.

# Saturday within the Octave of Corpus mobenia che boot che land the Christi.

Of the real presence of Jesus Christ in the blessed Eucharist.

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renders these divine mysteries venerable to a Christian; and that which principally calls for his faith and devotion, is the real presence of Jesus Christ, true God, and true man, and of all that he contains, both as God, and as man, in the blessed Eucharist. This real presence we learn from the express words of truth itself, so often repeated in the Holy Scripture; and from the express

press declaration of the church of God, against which the gates of hell can never prevail. Upon these two pillars of truth, the word of God, and the church of God, the humble and faithful Christian securely rests. Bow thyself down then, my soul, to adore this sacred truth. Let no proud thought of opposition arise in thee against this great mystery. Captivate thy understanding to the obedience of faith. Remember that the glory and merit of faith is to believe what thou canst not see: that the Almighty can do infinitely more than thou canst comprehend: and that no effort of mercy, bounty, and love, can be too great for him who has died for love.

Confider 2dly, how many ways this Lord of ours, who is both our Creator and our Redeemer, communicates himself to us. He came down from heavenand took our flesh and blood, in order to make us partakers of his divinity, and to carry us up to heaven. He offered up that flesh and blood upon the cross, as a sacrifice for us, to deliver us from fin and hell, and to purchase mercy, grace, and salvation for us. And he gives us here verily and indeed the fame flesh and blood. to be our food, comfort, and sapport, in our pilgrimage, till he brings us, by the virtue of that food, to our true country, where he will give himself to us, for all eterni-Thus, in his incarnation and birth, he made himfelf our companion; in his passion and death, the price of our ranfom : in the banquet of his last supper, our food and nourishment; and, in his heavenly kingdom, our eternal reward. O my foul, what return shall we be able to make him, for giving himself so many ways to us. Alas! dear Lord, we have nothing, to give but what is thine already: we have nothing to give that is worthy of thee. But be pleased to accept of all that out poverty can afford: and let this whole being of ours be forever dedicated to thy love, as a whole burntoffering, to lie always upon thy altar, there burning and confuming with that divine fire, which thou cameft to cast upon the earth; and which thou so much defiredst we learn from the express ve belonishes edibliodio

often repeated in the Sca Peripture; and from the expected repeated in the Sca Peripture;

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confidentially, what ought to be our fentiments, in coming to these divine mysteries, in consequence of our mith of the real presence of Jesus Christ, our Lord and our God, in this bleffed facrament. O! what reverential awe ought we to bring with us, when we draw near to fo tremendous a Majefty; in whose fight the whole creation is a mere nothing? What fear and dread, when we enter into his fanctuary, who is infinitely pure and holy; who fees all our guilt, and cannot endure iniquity? What fentiments of humility, when we reflect what he is, and what we are? What forrow and contrition for all our past treasons and offences against this infinite goodness? What sentiments of gratitude for his giving us here his own felf, in this wonderful manner? What defires of returning him love for love? O! How would a Christian be affected, if he visibly and evidently faw his God before him; in his approaching to this bleffed facrament! A lively faith, which apprehends things invisible, as if they were visible, would produce the like affections. O! give us, sweet Jesus, this lively faith.

Conclude ever to admire and adore the incomprehenfible ways by which God is pleased to communicate himself to us. Resolve to correspond, in the best manner you are able, with the riches of his bounty and goodnefs, by approaching to these divine mysteries with faith,

with fear, and with love. With going acceptable ad thin

#### Sunday within the Octave of Corpus Christi. and he som ist your own fouls

cives with him, and these off

On Christ's inviting us to this beavenly banquet. you truly happy, both here and hereafter

CONSIDER first, those words of the parable of this day's Gospel. A certain man made a great supper, and invited many, Luke xiv. 16. And reflect how our Lord has indeed prepared a great banquet for us, in the inflitution of the bleffed facrament; and has in vited us all to it. O facred banquet, fays the church, in

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the anthem, used during this octave, in which Christ is received; the memory of his passion is kept up; the ford is filled with grace; and a pledge is given us of the glory to come! A happy banquet, in which we feed upon the bread of heaven, and drink at the very fource of the fountain of life. To this heavenly banquet, the Son of God invites all the faithful, in the most loving manners Come to me, fays he, all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you, St. Matt. xi. 28. Ah! Christia ans, we all labour, and lie under many and very heavy burthens, from the fins and miseries, to which we are exposed, during our mortal pilgrimage : and, in this heavenly banquet, we come to Christ, to be refreshed, nourished, and strengthened by him. O sweet invitation ! O happy call to the fource of grace here, and of endless glory hereafter! flow weath a Briffigh beaftefred

Consider 2dly, how much our Lord is offended, by all fuch as refule to correspond to his loving invitation; and to come to his banquet. He has prepared this banque, out of pure love, that we may feast with him, and he with us. He defires, out of pure love, to impart himself, and all his goods to us; and therefore, justly refents his love being flighted by us; and our preferring the farm, the oxen, the wife, in a word, the world, and the things of the world, before him, and his banquet. Christians, if you have any love for Christ, furely you must be defirous of going to him, and entertaining yourfelves with him, in this great banquet of love. tends to union: and here it is that you are to be in fo perfect a manner united to him, as to abide in him, and live by him. If you have any love for yourselves, and for your own fouls, you must gladly go to this banquet, in which you find all your good, and all that can make

you truly happy, both here and hereafter.

Consider 3dly, that, in staying away from Christ, in the blessed sacrament, we do not only neglect his invitation, and slight his love; but also break through his ordinance, and violate his commandment. The very institution of these heavenly mysteries, to be the support of our spiritual life, for the time of our mortality, in a

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plies a commandment, for us to approach to themeand to make use of them. We should be guilty of felfmurther, if we suffered the body to perith, by refuting to take that food, which God has appointed for its fultenance: and are we not equally guilty of murthering our fouls, if we fuffer them to flarve, for want of the food and fuftenance which our Lord has allotted them in this life-giving banquet? Truth itself affures us, St. John vi. 54. that, without this heavenly food, we have no life in us: as then we are most strictly bound to maintain the life of our fouls, we are most strictly bound to use this food of life : and 'tis no less certain death to flay away from this bleffed facrament, than it is to come to it unworthily. Hou en eldeil one ow

Conclude my foul, to correspond henceforward with the loving invitation of thy dear Redeemer, by a frequent and worthy communion. Remember that the bleffed facrament is named our daily bread, in that prayer, which our Lord himself has taught usen O! how happy Thould we be, if we lived in such purity and holines, as to be worthy to be daily admitted,

like the primitive Christians, to this bread of heaven. O let us do our best, so to live, so to behave, in every respect, that we may at least very often approach to this heavenly table, and there feast ourselves with Jefus Christ!

Monday within the Octave of Corbrod 130 mis des pus Christi. Sand Hind?

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On the excellent fruits of this divine banquet.

ONSIDER first, that, in all the facraments, the bog worthy receiver is made partaker of divine grace, which is conveyed into the foul thro' those heavenly 230 channels: but the facrament of the Eucharift has this advantage, above all the rest, that it imparts to the foul the very fource itself, from which all graces flow, the giving us Jefus Christ himself, the author of all ud grace;

beraces this own body, his blood, his foul, and his divinity a and therefore, it is the most excellent of all the facraments, and the most plentiful in its fruits. Amongst which fruits, that which is most peculiar to this divine factament, is, that it has the like qualities and properties, with regard to the foul, as our corporal food mhas, with regard to the body; according to that of our Saviour, John vi, the bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world; and again, my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. Inafmuch as this bread supports our spiritual life, by the abundance of graces, which it furnishes, for the food and nourishment of our fouls : it repairs the daily decays. we are liable to, from our natural infirmity and corruption, and adds new firength and vigour to carry us on happily in our journey towards heaven. This is that bread that strengthens the heart of man, Pfalm cisi. 15: that gives us force against all temptations; that weakens our passions, and concupiscences; that enables us to grow daily in virtue, and to run forward in the way of all the divine commandments; till we arrive at the mountain of God; that is, at the very top of the perfection of a Christian life.

Consider adly, that this heavenly facrament not only feeds, nourishes, and strengthens the soul, in order to the maintaining in us the life of grace here, and the bringing us to the life of glory hereafter; but also tends, in a particular manner, to unite us by a union of love, with our fovereign good; and to transform us into Christ himself. He that eateth my flesh, faith our Lord, John vi. 57, 58, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me. and I in bim. As the living Father bath fent me, and I live by the Father: fo he that eateth me, the same aife shall live by me. The corporal food which we take, by the means of our natural heat and digeftion, is changed into our corporal substance: but this spiritual food is not changed into us; but, by its heavenly heat, changes us into itself. Chift is the food of them that are grown up, faith St Augustine; grow thou up, and thou shall feed on him yet thou falt not change him into thyfelf

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funing fire, fays the Apostle, Hebr. xii. 29. Fire has a power of transforming all things into itself, by communicating its nature and properties to all such things as it lays hold on: how much more shall this bright slame, which communicates itself to us by the sacred mysteries, set our souls on fire with divine love, and change us into our beloved?

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Consider 3dly, that the best disposition for this happy transformation, and blessed union of love; is to approach to this divine sacrament, with an entire resignation of ourselves, and of our whole being, into the hands of him, whom we are going to receive. 'As I wil-

- Ingly offered myself to God my Father for thy fins, faith the Beloved, (l. iv. c. 8. Of the following of Christ)
- with my hands stretched out upon the cross, and my
- body naked, so that nothing remained in me which
   was not turned into a facrifice, to appeare the divine
- wrath: even so must thou willingly offer thyself daily
- to me in the mass (and communion) together with all
- thy powers and affections, as heartily as thou art able,
- for a pure and holy oblation. What do I require
- more of thee, than that thou endeavour to refign thyfelf entirely to me? Whatfoever thou givest, besides
- thyfelf, I shall not regard; for I feek not thy gift, but
- thyself. As it would not suffice thee, if thou hadst
- all things but me; fo neither can it please me, what-
- ever thou givest, as long as thou offerest not thyself.
- 6 Offer thyfelf to me, and give thy whole felf for God,
- and thy offering will be accepted. Behold I offered my whole felf to the Father for thee, and have given
- my whole body and blood for thy food; that I might
- be all thine, and thou might the always mine: but if
- thou wilt fland upon thyself, and wilt not offer thy-
- felf freely to my will, thy offering is not perfect; nor will there be an entire union between us. --- My fen-
- tence stands firm : Except a man give up all, be cannot
- be my disciple. If therefore thou desirest to be my disciple, give thyself up to me, with all thy affections.

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Conclude to give all for all, if thou hopeft to relish the defruits of this heavenly facrament; that is, to give the whole felf, without referve, to him that gives his whole felf to thee. Let this oblation of thyfelf to God, ever go before, accompany, and follow the communion: there can be no better devotion.

#### Tuesday within the Octave of Corpus Christi.

On the dispositions we ought to bring to the holy communion.

ONSIDER first, those words of St. Paul, let him try, and examine himself, by looking well into the state of his conscience, and setting all right in his interiour, and so eat of that bread, &c. left otherwise approaching to it unworthily, he make himself guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord, v. 27: and receive his own judgment and condemnation, not discerning the body of the Lord, v. 29. so that the first, and most essential, disposition to a worthy communion, is purity of conscience, at least from all mortal fin. Wholoever prefumes to approach to purity itself, in these facred mysteries, must be clean and pure. Saneta Sanetis. Holy things are for them that are holy. God will be Sanctified in them that approach to him, Levit. x. 3. And will execute justice and judgment on them, that defile and profane his fanctuary, by entering in thither, and receiving the Holy of bolies, with a foul polluted with wilful fin. Good God, keep me from being ever fo miferable!

Consider 2dly, how great is the guilt of a communion, made without this disposition of purity of conscience. 'Tis a most grievous facrilege, by profaning the most holy of all the facraments. 'Tis a most heinous injury and affront offered to our Lord himself in person, by bringing him into a poliuted habitation.

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A foul under the guilt of mortal fin is possessed by devils: the unworthy communicant, therefore, introduces the Lord of glory into a den of unclean spirits. He imitates the treason of Judas, by betraying him, as much as lyes in him, to his enemies. He lays violent hands on our Lord, like the Jews; and, like them, is guilty of the body and blood of Christ. We should have a horrour of the wretch, who, by wilful murder, had been guilty of innocent blood; though it were but of the meanest person living: what then ought we to think of ourselves, if, by an unworthy communion, we should be guilty of the blood of the Son of God himfelf? Would not such a crime as this cry to heaven for vengeance? Would it not very much darken the understanding; and harden the heart? Would it not put the foul even in the broad road of final impenitance? It would be, according to the Apostle, receiving judgment, that is, demnation, to ourselves. Ah! what penance, what floods of tears, would be required, agreeable to the great king alleg a transfer of decreeas

Confider 3dly, that a foul, which approaches to the Holy of holies, in these facred mysteries, ought not to content herfelf, with only aiming at being pure from mortal fin; and, for that end, preparing herfelf by contrition and confession: but, ought also, as much as possible, to purify herself from all affections to venial fins; and all habits of any fuch fins; which, when fully deliberate, do a deal of mischief to the soul, and in particular, hinder her very much, from being fenfible of the heavenly fweetness, and excellent fruits of this divine facrament. Ah! Christians, could we but see these spots, those stains, those filthy scabs, that scurf, that leprofy, which these habits of lies of excuse, of anger, and impatience, of vanity, of curiofity, of indulging our fenfuality in eating, drinking, Sch bring upon the foul? we should be fensible, how unfit they make us, for the embraces of this, our heavenly spoule, who is beautiful above the fons of men, Pf. xliv. 3. 1111 odi Conclude ever to look to the flate of thy conscience, and to purify it, from all known and deliberate fig.

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when ever thou art preparing thy foul, for Jesus Christ, Let thy intention also be pure; by having no other view, in thy communion, but his glory, and thy falvation; and thy affections pure from all inordinate love of creatures; when thou presentest thyself, at his table; and thou shalt not fail to be a welcome guest.

## Wednesday within the Octave of Corpus Christi.

Of devotion before communion.

ONSIDER first, that the foul, which defires to prepare a fit lodging for Jesus Christ, whom the is to receive in the bleffed facrament, must not only drive out Satan from her; and rid her inward house of the dirt and filth of fin : but must also procure the proper ornaments and furniture of virtue and devotion. to deck out herfelf, and her lodging; that it may be agreeable to the great king, that comes to vifit her, The work is great, faid David, I Paralip xxix. 1. For a house is preparing, not for man, but for God : yea rather, in our case, for him, that is both God and map, The ground-work of this preparation, must be a lively faith; and a ferious confideration of the work we are about; who it is that we are to receive; how great and glorious, how pure and holy, &c? And who we are, that are going to receive him; how wretched, and unworthy? This confideration must be accompanied. or followed, with earnest prayer, to beg of this infinite Majeffy, that, fince he knows our great poverty, and inability to prepare him a fit lodging; he himfelf would prepare one for himself; by fending before-hand those praces and virtues, and that fervour of devotion. which may fit our fouls for him.

Consider adly, that the devotion, which we ought to bring with us to this bleffed facrament, consists, in the first place, in a most profound humility, and awful reverence, for these tremendous mysteries, sanctified by the real presence of Jesus Christ himself, the Land

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03.48 of glory, and the fountain of all fanctity. O! how ought we to annihilate ourselves in the light of this great Lord, and maker, of heaven and earth! How ought we to fear and tremble, in confideration of our manifold treafons against him, and our base unworthinefs! With what profound reverence ought we to approach to the Holy of holies, who lies here concealed under these sacramental veils! But then, lest this fear and reverence, should go so far, as to drive us away from this fountain of life; it must be qualified, with an humble confidence in the infinite goodness and mercy of him, who invites us to come; and who is ever ready to receive, with open arms, his prodigal children, when they leave the hulks of the fwine, and return to him, with a true fense of their unworthiness. O!

bleffed be his holy name for evermore!

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Confider 3dly, that as nothing but pure love brings our Lord to us, in this divine facrament; fo the devotion he principally expects of us, when we approach to him, is a return of love. Which ever way we consider these facred mysteries, we shall find that all things here call for our love; and indispensably oblige us to confecrate our whole heart, with all its affections, to this most lovely, and most loving Lord. His death and paffion, endured for the love of us, which we here commemorate; an incomprehensible mystery of love, which will aftonish men and Angels to all eternity: the wonders he has wrought in this heavenly facrament, that he might make himself our food, and unite us to himself: the inestimable treasures he here imparts to us; the pledge he here gives us of our redemption, and of our everlasting salvation; all concur to thew forth his love for us; and to claim a return of our whole heart. O my foul, can we fee fo much love on his part; and not be inflamed with a defire of loving him with all our power? Can we remain cold, when we approach to fo great a fire? Remember thou art going to thy fovereign good; to the fource of all grace; to the fountain of life: go then with a hunger and thirst, with an ardent defire, to this great by a proper devotion after then the thee

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banquet of love, where thou are to feed upon thy lover himself; and he will not fail to fill thee with all that is good.

Conclude to exercise thyself always before communion, in acts of saith, reverence, and humility; in acts of hope and confidence in thy Saviour; in acts of divine love, and in ardent desires after him, accompanied with a grateful remembrance of the love he has shewed thee, in dying for thee; and in here giving himself to thee; and the more thou bringest with thee of this preparation and devotion, which enlarges as it were the vessel of thy heart, the more plentifully wilt thou draw of the waters of divine grace from this fountain of life.

### Thursday the Octave of Corpus Christi.

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#### On devotion after communica.

ONSIDER first, that, as the foul must prepare herfelf, to go to receive Jefus Christ, by proper devotion before communion; fo the must also take care to entertain him in a proper manner, after the has received him; and to make good use of that favourable time, (most happy to her above all times, if well employed) during which, the has him really prefent with her, both in his divine, and human, nature; that is, both as God and man. It would be a gross affront, after being favoured with a vifit of the King of heaven, defiring to feast himself with us, and bringing all his treasures with him, to enrich our fouls; if we should turn our backs immediately upon him, and take no farther notice of him. The very meanest of our friends would have reason to resent so contemptuous an usage; how much more so great a Lord? See my foul, if the little care thou hast taken, to manage, to the best advantage, those happy minutes in which thou hast Jesus Christ with thee, by a proper devotion after VOL. I. comreaped to little fruit from thy repeated communions; which otherwise might long fince have made thee a

Saint. Of repent and amend! saint several od vam and

Confider 2dly, what this devotion is, with which we are to entertain our Lord after receiving him. First, we are to welcome him, by faith, hope, and love: by a lively faith of all his mysteries; but, in particular, that we have here really with us, in this bleffed facrament, him who is our Maker, and our Redeemer; infinite in majesty, and infinite in mercy; and who brings with him all the treasures of heaven to enrich us: by a firm hope, that he will now, by this blood of the covenant, take full possession of our fouls, and make them his, both for time, and eternity: by an ardent love, aspiring with all our power and affections to an eternal union with our beloved; whom we here receive: I have found him whom my foul loveth; I will hold him faft, and will never let him go. In the next place, we ought to cast ourselves: down at his feet, and to pay him the best homage and adoration we are capable of; bringing all the powers of our foul before him, and obliging them all to bow down to him, and worship him. But as all this ought to be accompanied with a lively fense of our unworthiness and fins; we must also take this opportunity of making an humble confession, like Magdalene, of all our treasons, at his feet, craving his mercy for what is past, and the grace of a change of heart, and life, for the time to come.

Consider 3dly, that, after these first homages, the soul must, for some time sollowing her communion, keep close to our Lord; and give space for his grace to penetrate more and more into her interiour, and to bring sorth there its proper fruit. For this end, she must entertain him with praise and thanksgiving; inviting all heaven and earth, all Angels and Saints, together with the whole creation, to join with her in his praises; and wishing she had the hearts and tongues of all his creatures, that she might employ them all in loving and

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glorifying him, in return for all the wonders of his love, and goodness to her. She must also offer herself, and all that she has, without reserve, into his hands; that she may be forever his; and that her whole being may be made as a holocaust, or whole burnt-offering, to evaporate to his glory. In fine, she must remember that she is now before the throne of grace; and that the Lord, whom she has with her, carries about with him all the treasures of divine grace: and therefore, she must lay before him all her wants, and spiritual necessities; and beg of him, by this opportunity, plentiful supplies of grace, both for herself, and for the whole church, in the same and same and same and same church.

Conclude O my foul, to entertain thy Saviour in this manner, as often as thou shalt receive him in the divine mysteries. Take care also to be more than ordinarily recollected, on the whole day following thy communion; and to keep a great guard upon thyself; who less the enemy, who knows what a treasure thou hast received; and is therefore most busy about thee, ong this occasion, in hopes of robbing thee of it; should fling some stumbling-block in thy way, to make thee fall into sin, either by passion, or concupiscence; that so, by this means, he may drive Christ away from thee, and get possession of thy soul.

N.B. That as often as the Octave of Corpus-Christic shall fall before the thirteenth day of the month of June; the meditations that shall then be wanting in this place, are to be taken out of the number of those that are marked for the month of February; which were omitted at that time, to give place to the meditations appointed for Lent.

elose to our time and more into her interiour, and to bring forth there its proper fruit. For this end, she mult forth there its proper fruit. For this end, she mult entertain him with proven and early all Anglis and Saints, together with the whole treatments of all his praises; every the style had the shall and congues of all his entures, that she might employ them all in lowing and coloring that she might employ them all in lowing and coloring that the she might employ them all in lowing and

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daily to thrown a Modernard, lid a Mubloody rates not, on our altars, under the forms of bread and wine; agreeable to the priest-hood, and sacrifice of Melchicodech, which he offer All named and wine; Gen xiv.

18. Hence in the thory ninth Calm Specien in the contract of the period and th

CONSIDER first, that the bleffed Eucharist is not only a factament, in which we receive the body and blood of Christ, for the food and nourishment of our fouls; but is also a facrifice, in which this same body and blood of Christ is offered up to God, in remembrance of his death and paffion, for the honour and glory of God; in thankfgiving for all his benefits; to obtain pardon for all our fins; and grace in all our neceffities. Sacrifice is a sovereign act of religious worship, due to God alone; inasmuch as it testifies, by the oblation made to him, that he is the fovereign Lord of all things, the mafter of life and death; our first beginning, and last end. Now, from the beginning of the world, the children of God were accustomed to offer facrifices to him: and this was the folemn worthip, in which they met together, to join in paying their homage, and adorat on to him. In the old law, a great variety of these sacrifices was prescribed, of burnt offerings, of fin-offerings, of peace offerings, &c. but all these were but figures, and imperfect shadows, of the great facrifice, which was referved for the law of grace, and which we celebrate in the bleffed Eucha rift: a facrifice, in which the Son of God himfelf is both prieft, and victim.

Confider 2dly, that as the law of Moses, was to give way to the law of Christ, of which it was a figure; and the priest-hood of the sons of Aaron, was to yield to him that is a priest forever, according to the arder of Melchisedech: so all those ancient sucrifices of the old law, which were but figures, and shadows, were to make way for the new facrifice of Christ's institution; which is no other than that of his own hody and blood: not as prefigured, by the slesh and blood of calves or lambs; but as exhibited in truth; once in a bloody manner, on the altar of the cross;

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daily to the end of the world, in an unbloody manner, on our altars, under the forms of bread and wine; agreeable to the priest-hood, and facrifice of Melchifedech, which he offered in bread, and wine; Gen. xiv. 18. Hence, in the thirty-ninth Pfalm, spoken in the person of Christ, the secretice of his own body is subflittled in the place of all those ancient victims, in these words. Sacrifice and oblation thou didft not defire: but thou hast fitted a body to me (for fo St. Paul reads it. Heb. x. 5.) Burnt-offering, and fin-offering, thou didft not require : then faid I, behold I come. And this new facrifice of the Christian church, this clean-offering, which should be offered in every place, among the Gentiles, is foretold Malachi. i. II. and there accepted of by the Lord; at the same time as he declares he will receive no more of the Jewish facrifices, v. 10.

Consider 3dly, that this great facilities of the Eucharift effentially confifts in the confecration of the bread, and wine, into the body and blood of Christs. and in the offering up of this same body, and blood, to God, by the ministery of the priest, as a perpetual memorial of the facrifice of the crofs, and a continuation of the same, to the end of the world. For, by the separate consecration of the bread, into the body of Christ, and of the wine, into his blood, performed by the prieft, in the name and person of Christ, our great high-priest; Christ Jesus presents himself to his Father, upon out altars, as flain for us; and his blood, as fhed for us; and, under this figure of death, offers up his own body and blood, to answer all the ends and intentions, for which we ought to offer facrifice to God. Not as if there were any infufficiency in his facrifice of the crofs; by which he compleatly redeemed us, and opened to us the fountain of all mercy; grace, and falvation; but that we might have, in this eucharistick facrifice a standing memorial of our redemption; a daily means of applying the fruit of it to our fouls; a daily communion one with another, by joining together in the folemn worship of facrifice; as the children of God had always done, from the beginsale in a bloody man Ech Un the altar of the crofs; MED IST AND WON STORE

mysteries, with our high-priest, and victim, Christ Jest fus; and of coming to God, with him, and through him.

Conclude to frequent daily this great means of falvation, which our Lord has prepared for us, in the eucharistick facrifice: admire and adore the wonders of the power and goodness of God, manifested to us therein, and resolve to correspond with them by faith, hope, and love.

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## be bere received from June 15. The said said series

On the excellence of the eucharistick facrifice.

ONSIDER fift, that the excellence and dignity of a facrifice, is to be estimated by the excellence and dign'ty of the victim, that is offered; of the prieft, that makes the offering; and of the ends, for which the oblation is made. Now all these things concur to fecommend, in the highest degree, the facrifice of the b'effed Eucharist; which, in substance, is the same with that which the Son of God offered upon the cross, because both the victim is the same, and the chief priest is the fame : and both the one and the other answer the fame ends, though in a different manner. See then, my foul, and admire the excellence of this great facrifice, which is offered on our altars: a facrifice in which the whole passion and death of Jesus Christ is folemnly acted by himself in person; in such manner as to be himself both the priest and the victim; the facrificer and the facrifice. Christ Jesus, the Son of God, was the great high prieft of God and men, who for lemnly offered his own body and blood upon the cross a facrifice to God for all mankind : his body and blood was the victim, by which we were redeemed. And this fame great high-priest of God and men, officiates alfo in person, in the facrifice of the altar; and there offers up the same victim of his body and blood to his beavenly Father, in our behalf. O can any thing be more

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more divine than duch a nacrification which a God line the prieft, and a God the big with our blandist but by Both both by Berief.

Confider adly, the noble ends and intentions for which this facrifice is daily offered, by the Son of God, in person, upon our altars, where he presents himself, attended by his heavenly host, as the highest prieft of heaven and earth and folemnly offers his body, has delivered up, broken and flain; and his blood as poured out. First, as a facrifice of fovereign? adoration and homage, praise and glory to God on high; infinitely more honoured by this worship, which he here receives from his own Son, mystically dying on our altars; than by all the holocausts, and burnt offerings, of the patriarchs and prophets; and all the homage, which all the Saints put together, either have, or ever could, offer to him; altho' their whole being were to evaporate to his glory. Secondly, he offers up his body and blood, as a facrifice of a general thankf-giving; of most sweet odour in the light of God, for all his graces, bleffings, and communications of his goodness, to any of his creatures; for our creation, preservation, redemption &c. for his own great glory; for the whole church of heaven and earth; and for all that he has done in favour of Christ (the great head of the church of heaven and earth) according to his human nature. Thirdly, he offers his body and blood, together with his whole passion and death, as a facrifice of a general propitiation, for the fins of the living, and the dead, in favour of whom he represents to his eternal Father, the blood of the everlasting covenant. And fourthly, he offers the same body and blood, as a facrifice of a general supplication for his whole family; that is, for his whole church, and for all its pastors, and people; that all graces and bleffings may be derived to their fouls, from the fountains of their Saviour. O inffmite goodness! What treasures hast thou opened for us, in these divine mysteries!

brate, or affift at these sacred mysteries, it may be

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proper to represent to ourselves, that we are called upon, as by a royal proclamation from heaven, to be fanclified, and to come along with our great highprieft, Jefus Christ, the Son of God, and with his whole church of heaven and earth; and to join in a most solemn sacrifice, that is going to be offered to God, for all the great ends above-mentioned. Yes Christians: for it is a most certain truth, that, in this divine facrifice, we present ourselves at the altar of God, before, the throne of his mercy, with Jesus Christ his Son at our head; and in the fociety of his whole family, the whole people of God, wherever they are; (for this facrifice is offered by Jesus Christ in the name of them all) and that, by the hands of this our high-prieft, and, with the concurrence of his whole church, we here offer up to God the most acceptable victim that can be presented to his divine majesty; the most agreeable adoration and thanksgiving, that can be offered; the most powerful attonement for fin; and the most effectual means for obtaining all graces and bleffings; by offering up the passion and death of the Son of God.

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Conclude to approach always to these most facred and sublime mysteries, with the most profound veneration, lively faith, and ardent devotion; and ever to join your intention, according to all these four ends, with the principal offerer Jesus Christ,

and with his whole church.

### grain of chaff, senguare 16. June 16. each the all :

On the blessed Eucharist, as it is a sacrifice of adoration and praise.

CONSIDER first, the indispensable obligation incumbent upon man, as a rational creature, made by God, and for God, to present his homage of adoration, praise, and glory, to his Maker. For this reason, the children of God, from the beginning, offered up sacrifices to the Deity: for this reason, they instin

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instituted holocausts, or whole burnt-offerings, in which the whole victim was consumed by fire, evaporating on God's altar, in testimony of his being the fovereign Lord of all: for this reason, the plalms were composed by divine inspiration; and appointed to be fung, together with mufical instruments, to the praise, and glory of God; and to accompany the facrifices, offered in the temple of God. Such was the zeal of these ancient servants of God, for paying him the best homage, they were able, of adoration, and praise: and such ought to be, at all times, the sincere disposition of all that believe in God, as to be willing to adore, and praise, worship and serve, this their first beginning, and last end, with all their power; and to confecrate their whole being to his glory. See my foul,

if this be thy disposition.

Consider, 2dly, how little is all that man can offer, of his own fund, even though his whole being were to evaporate to the glory of God, when compared with the infinite majesty of God, and the homage, and adoration, which he deferves. If the whole creation could be made one holocaust, or burnt-offering, for the glory of God; alas! it would be all no more in the eyes of so great a king, than as if a grain of chaff were to be burnt in honour of some earthly monarch. Because there is no proportion between that which is finite, and that which is infinite : and therefore the whole creation, compared to God, is less than one grain of chaff, compared with an earthly monarch, or even with the whole creation. How mean then is all that man can offer of his own, or of any other creature's, and how unworthy and insufficient to be made a facrifice of adoration and praise to the divine Majesty? See then, my soul, how greatly we are obliged to the Son of God, who, by the institution of the bleffed Eucharift, has furnished us with a facrifice of adoration, homage, praise, and glory, worthy of God; as being of an infinite value, by reason of the infinite dignity: both of the priest, and victim.

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Consider 3dly, how our Lord, expiring and dying upon the crofs, in obedience to his Father's will, offered himself in facrifice in such manner, that his death was not only in the nature of a fin-offering, or a facrifice of propitiation for the fins of the world; but also in the nature of a burnt-offering, (in which the whole victim is given to God without referve) or a facrifice of adoration, homage, praife, and glory. As then, in the bleffed Eucharift, Christ himself, in perfon, celebrates his own death, and offers up the fame facrifice, in substance, with that which he offered expuring upon the crofs; so we have here the same adoration, homage, praife, and glory, offered by Christ, as God's high-prieft, and our high-prieft, to his eternal Father: and this facrifice of adoration, homage, praise, and glory, he has made over to us: fo that we are enabled, by joining with him in these facred mysteries, to offer up daily to our God, a homage, and adoration, of infinite value, of elde ed ew blood cruter

Conclude with admiration of the infinite power, wisdom, and goodness of God, manifested to us in the institution of this divine sacrifice, by means of which a victim of infinite value is daily offered, and will be daily offered, to the end of the world, upon a million of altars, by a priest of infinite dignity, to give infinite honour, and glory, to his divine Majesty; and to be, at the same time, an inexhaustible source of all good to us. O! let us daily and hourly join our adoration and praise, with that which is, in every place, offered by our high-priest, in these divine mysteries; and it will not fail of being acceptable through him,

felf our priest and victor and arther quality, to offer up in our behalf a worthy sacrifice of thanksgiving, no less infinite, by reason of the dignity of his person, than those savours and mercies were, for which he makes this return of thanks. This sacrifice of thanksgiving he offered once upon the cross, and now offers daily in the Eucharist, upon the cross, and now offers daily in the Eucharist, upon the world; and upon this offering he expects that his whole family of in this offering he expects that his whole family of heaven

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Confider 3dly, how our Lord, expiring and dying

o lliw e rached en fune 170 at chors att noque and hard barrel on the bleffed Eucharist, as it is a sacrifice of thanks a facilities of propination griving he fins of the world; but sife in the nature of

ONSIDER first, that we are also indispensably obe? bliged to return due thanks to God, for all his bounties, favours, and mercies to us; and that, as thefe are boundless and infinite, he has a right to call for a repl turn of all the gratitude and love we are capable of and that nothing less than an infinite thanksgiving, can be equivalent to the debt we owe him. But O! how little is all that our flore can afford; towards discharging so immense a debt? If we should even offer him our whole being; and this could be a return for the great benefit of our creation, by which he has given us this being, what should we have left to give him? Or what return should we be able to make him, for our redemp tion, for our prefervation, for our vocation, and for fo many others his benefits; and above all for that eternal free love of his for us, which is the fource of all these benefits? See then how good our God has been, in furnishing us, by the means of the eucharistick facrifice, with a standing fund to enable us to discharge this infinite debt, and to render him a thanksgiving work and to be, at the fame time, an inc. mid flo what

Consider adly, that, as all the thankf-offerings of the law of nature, and of the law of Moles, fell infinitely short of answering, in a proper and sufficient manner, the obligation incumbent on mankind, of returning due thanks to God; the Son of God himfelf became man, to make himfelf our priest and victim; and, in that quality, to offer up in our behalf a worthy facrifice of thanksgiving, no less infinite, by reason of the dignity of his person, than those favours and mercies were, for which he makes this return of thanks. This facrifice of thanksgiving he offered once upon the cross, and now offers daily in the Eucharist, upon million of altars, throughout the world: and, in this offering he expects that his whole family of

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heaven and earth should join with him; that, with him, and through him, they may make a daily return of worthy thanks, for all God's bleffings, bestowed upon both him, and them. See, my foul, thou be never wanting in this duty.

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Confider 3dly, what this thankfgiving is, that we are to offer up daily to God, in the facrifice of the bleffed Eucharist; a facrifice which takes its very name from thanksgiving! I. We are to return thanks to God for his own great g'ory, manifested in all his works. 2. We are to thank him in particular, for the great work of our redemption. 3. We are to offer up to him this facrifice, in thanksgiving for the incarnation and birth of his Son; and for all the bleffings bestowed upon him, according to his human nature, for his doctrine and miracles, for his passion and death; for his resurrection and ascension; and for all that power, which is given him in heaven and earth. 4. We are likewise to offer up this facrifice, in thankfgiving for ourselves, and for the whole church, triumphant, militant, and patient; and for all that mercy, grace, and falvation, which has, at any time, been derived upon any man from the fovereign source of all good, through Jesus Christ. Wee Christians, how much we all, in general, have to thank God for; befides the special favours, for which each one in particular stands indebted to the divine bounty. But infinite thanks be to his infinite goodness, who has provided for us this facrifice of infinite value, in which we may daily present ourselves before him, in the conpany of Jesus Christ his Son, and make him a suitable and acceptable offering, through him, for all his favours.

Conclude to unite daily thy intentions with those, with which Jesus Christ daily offers this sacrifice, upon all the altars throughout his church: the thanksgiving offered by him, and nothing less, will be equal to the debt.

blood, interceeds to obtain mercy and pardon for us?
What finner can delipair of the forgiveners of his fins, interpretable the prodigal child, he defires to return home to bis.

hearen and sauch thould join with him; that, with him

and through him. 8 r. snuffinger a daily return of On the beffed Eucharist, as it is a facrifice of propitiation, wind affi in godnew

Confider edity, what this that CONSIDER first, that the facrifice of the body and blood of Christ is also a fin-offering; or a facrifice of propitiation, for obtaining mercy and pardon for our fins. The debt, man contracted to the divine justice by fin, was infinite; and nothing that any one pure man, or even all mankind put together, could do, or fuffer for the expiation of fin, could bear any kind of proportion with that debt, or go any part of the way towards the cancelling of it: much less could the blood of oxen, or of goats, used in the ancient fin-offerings of the law, have any virtue in them to wash away fin. Therefore did the Son of God take a body and plood for us, to substitute this new victim in the place of those old ones, Pfalm xxxix. This body and blood he offered in facrifice upon the crofs, for the fins of all mankind: with this he paid our ranfom, and compleatly redeemed us: this fame he has bequeathed to us in the facrament, and in the facrifice of the bleffed Eucharift; in which, as our priest and victim, he daily appears before his Father in our behalf; and represents his passion and death to him, to obtain the forgiveness of our fires. Thus the facrifice of the Eucharist is truly propitiatory. in virtue of that blood of the New Testament, the fruit of which it applies to our fouls.

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Confider 2dly, what an advantage it is to our fouls. to have here daily celebrated amongst us, this propitiatory facrifice, in which the Lamb that taketh away the fins of the world, presents to his eternal Father, upon our altars, under the mystical veils that represent his death, his body, as broken and flain for us, and his blood as fled for our fins: and, with this body and blood, interceeds to obtain mercy and pardon for us. What finner can despair of the forgiveness of his fins (if, like the prodigal child, he defires to return home to

VOL. I. his his true father) when he sees here before him, bleeding as it were upon the altar, the victim, by whose blood all our sins were cancelled? When he sees the great high priest of God and man, offering a sacrifice for the remission of his sins? O let us go therefore with considence to this throne of grace: that we may obtain mercy, and

find grace in feasonable aid, Heb. iv. 16.

Confider 3dly, my foul, how much occasion thou hast for this facrifice of propitiation. Alas, how great is the debt thou owest to divine justice, for thy numberless fins ! Recount to thyfelf, Ofinner, in the presence of thy God, all thy years in the bitterness of thy foul, Ifai. xxxviii. 15. See how very early thou didft incur the dreadful guilt of mortal fin; by turning away from God, to follow vanity, and thereby breaking through thy baptifmalengagements; profaning God's temple within thee; affronting the Spirit of God; and treading under foot the blood of the Son of God! Reflect how much thy fins have been multiplied, after so bad a beginning revery day, from that time to this very hour. Ah! What hait that offer to the Lord that is worthy? Wherewith Shalt thou kneel before the high God? Mich. vi. 6. Neither hetocausts nor thousands of rams; nor yet thy own blood, can expiate thy guilt. The blood of Christ alone can do it : and with this thou kneelest before the Most High, when thou affifteft at the facrifice of the altar; where this blood is applied to thy foul. Neither is it applicable to thy foul alone; but the inexhaustible treasures of mercy, which are laid open in these sacred mysteries, give us a confidence to join all here in a body, with our great advocate and high priest at our head, and to plead for mercy, through this same blood, for our brethren alfo, both living and dead; that we may obtain for them all, the remission of their sins, and the discharge of all the debt of punishment due to their fins.

Conclude to embrace this great means of obtaining mercy and grace, by affifting daily, if it lyes in thy power, at this propitiatory facrifice, with a contrite and bumble heart; and making, on this occasion, a confession of all thy fins, at the feet of Jesus Christ, who is

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here both priest and victim: if thou art diligent in this practice, the blood of Christ will infallibly obtain for thee the remission of thy sins,

## priest of God and man, offering a sacrifice for the remission of his sine i OOI vanifere fore with confidence

On the bleffed Eucharist, as it is a sacrifice of prayer and supplication.

CONSIDER first, that the bleffed Eucharist, inaf much as it is a facrifice, does not only, in a most perfect manner, answer the designs and intentions of the burnt-offerings, thanks-offerings, and fin-offerings, of the law, by being offered up for the adoration and praise of the Deity, in thankfgiving for all his benefits, and for the remission of all our fins; but also, with infinite advantage, answers the ends of the peace-offerings of the ancients; by being offered up for obtaining all graces and bleffings from God, through the blood of Jelus Christ. No one can come to the Father, but by him, St. John xiv. 6. Here we approach to God both by him, and with him too; both as our prieff, and as our victime. If you afk the Father any thing in my name, faith he, St. John xvi. 23, he will give it you. O how wholesome then must this facrifice of supplication be to all Christian people, in which we not only ask in the name of Jesus Christ, but come with his facred blood, before the throne. of grace; and in which, he himself in person pleads for

2. Consider how many and great our necessities are, both in general, and in particular; and how great the miseries we are liable to; that you may set a greater value upon this never-failing source of all blessings, which the divine bounty has opened to us, in the facrifice of the Eucharist. Alas! Of ourselves we can do nothing we can neither believe, hope, love, nor repent; nor make so much as any one step towards our justification, or salvation, without the help of heaven: we are encompassed on all sides with dreadful dangers, that threads our with the worst of evils, both for time and eternish only silvation.

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crifice of the altar for tis then thou art near the four nity. Ah how true it is, that we are indeed weetcheds and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked! Apoc. But, in this facrifice, our Lord has provided us with an inexhaustible fund of grace; supplied, without ever decaying, out of the fountains of our Saviour, Isai. xii. 3. in order to answer all our necessities, to heal all our infirmities, to guard us against all dangers, and to pedress all our miseries. O blessed be his infinite goodnefs! O my foul, whatfoever thy wants are, here they are to be supplied: run here to Jesus Christ, thy priest and facrifice; and with him, and through him, to his Father: and he will give thee all good, and himself into the bargain. duty effectably with aniagrad adtlot

every Day in the Year

1113. Consider that, in this facrifice of supplication and prayer, we are not limited, or confined in our addresses, as if we were to ask, and to receive, for ourselves alone: but, as we have here upon the altar, the victim flain for the general redemption of the whole world; and as the high priest of God and man here appears before his heavenly Father, in behalf of all mankind; we are autherifed to put up our petitions with him, and through him, for the general neoeffities of the whole church of God, and of all mankind: that the holy name of God may be fanclified by all; that his kingdom of grace may be propagated through all nations, and through all hearts; that his will may be done by all, and in all things; that his church may be exalted by the fanctity of her prelates and pastors, and propagated throughout the world; that all infidels, heretics, and finners, may be converted; that all errors and abuses may be corrected; that we may be preferved from wars, plagues, famines, earthquakes, and all other evils; and that, being delivered from the hands of our enemies, we may ferve God, without fear, in boliness and justice before him, all our days, St. Luke i. 74, 75. All this, with all other graces and bleffings, we are encouraged to alk with con--fidence, for the whole world, in this facrifice, where -Christis both victim and priest. To an in all office noise

ben Conclude to manage always, to the best advantage, that favourable time, when thou art affifting at the fa-

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June 20.

On the devotion, with which we are to affift at the

ONSIDER fieff, that these heavenly mysteries, which we celebrate in the facrifice of the altar. and the real presence of Jesus Christ the Son of God, whom we believe to be truly there, both as prieft, and victim; require that we should assist thereat, with all possible devotion: but especially with a lively faith ; a most profound reverence; and a heart inflamed with love for that lamb of God, who there offers himfelf in facrifice for us. The fervants of God have fometimes feen Angels affiffing round the altar, and adoring their Lord: open thou thy eyes, my foul, as often as thou art present at the facred mysteries, to contemplate, with a lively faith, this Lord of Angels upon our altars, accompanied with these heavenly Spirits; and see thou worship him there, with that awful reverence, and tender affection, which his infinite Majesty, and his infinite love for thee, require at thy hands. Reflect on that profound respect, with which the people of God, in ancient times, reverenced the fanctuary, in which the ark of the covenant was deposited; so that no one but the high priest, and he but once a year, was allowed to chter within the veil. O how much more profoundly oughtest thou to reverence this true fanctuary of God, and the Lord himself of the covenant, present in our tremendous mysteries!

lation to the passion and death of the Son of God, in such manner as to be, in effect, the same sacrifice, the same victim, and the same priest; so the devotion with which we are to assist at the altat, should have a particular relation to the sufferings of Jesus Christ. Our Saviour himself here officiates in person, and acts as in a slacred and the small state and the same state.

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accompany him in this action, with fuitable affection and devotion. Had we been present, with a true belief in him, when he was offering upon the cross the sacrifice of our redemption, with what sentiments of love and gratitude, with what deep sense of sorrow and repentance for our sins, with what fervour of devotion, should we have waited upon him there; meditating upon his infinite goodness and love for us, manifested in his passion; and on the heinous enormity of our sins, which could not be expiated but with his facred blood? With the like sentiments of devotion, ought we to assist at this solemn memorial, and representation, of his passion, in the eucharistick sacrifice.

bus 3. Confider, that, as often as we affift at this facrifice, we are not only to commemorate, by meditation, othe passion and death of the Son of God; but also to make along with us, as it were, to God the Father, his Son flain for us, and his precious blood thed for us. And this in fuch manner as to offer up ourselves also to mhim, with the whole church, which is the mystical boeddy of his Son, by his hands; and in union with the offering which he, who is our head, there makes of himfelf. We are also, at the same time, to join our intentions with his; as he is our chief prieft, and principal offerer; and with those of the whole people of God, according to the fou regreat ends of facrifice; going, as it were in a body, with Christ Jesus at our head; and, with him, we are to offer adoration, praise, and thankfgiving, to God; and to pray, and beg mercy, through him, both for ourselves, and for all the world. Thus the whole church of God daily joins herself with Christ Jefus her head, both as the offerer, and the offering, in

Calvary, to contemplate there thy divine Redeemer, a bleeding facrifice for the fins of the grave facrifice of the first of the grave facrifice.

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sade of guiroffo left fitiwan, shash sid ed i flowith for sakem and devotion. Had we been prefent, with a snoitnest lief in him, when he was offering upon the cross the fa-

crifice of our redemption swift hat sentiments of love and gratitude, with what deep and of forrow and re-

pentance for noinummos latinique of no devotion, thould we have wated upon him there; meditating up-

I. ONSIDER that, next to the confectation, in which confifts the very effence of the facrifice of the altar; inafmuch as the body and blood of Christ-are thereby exhibited, and presented to God, for all the four ends of facrifice; the principal part is the communion. Now, as all the affiftants ought to join with the prieft, in offering up, by his hands, and by the hands of the invisible high-priest Christ Jesus. this most holy facrifice, for all those great ends; fo it were to be wish'd, that all would join with him, in the communion also; at least by making a spiritual communion, as often as they hear mass. This foiritual communion, when made with proper devotion. brings Jesus Christ to our souls in spirit, so that. though we do not receive verily and indeed, his body and blood, we partake plentifully of his heavenly grace, and unite ourselves in spirit to him, who is the fountain of all grace. O let us continually aspire after this happy union of grace and love!

communion with fruit, we must be in the state of grace: Jesus Christ will not unite himself to a foul, in which Satan dwells. Then we must invite our Lord into our inward house, I. By a lively faith of his real presence on our altars; of what he is; of what he has done, and suffered for the love of us; and shim in this sacrament, and which he carries about with him, in this sacrament, and which he desires to impart this in this sacrament, and which he desires to impart and thirst, after this life-giving food. 3. By a profound and bumility, in the acknowledgment of our great unworgenthings attor receive him sacramentally; and bewaiting

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our manifold fins in his presence. And lastly, by enstanced affections of love, offering our whole selves to him, and preffing him to come, and take full posfession of our souls, for time and eternity. Such devotion as this will not fail to bring him to us, and engage him to open his heavenly treasures in our

favour.

3. Consider that a spiritual communion may be made, with fruit to the foul, not only as often as we affift at the facrifice of the altar; but also at any other hour we please, either of the day or night: and this, by fighing after Jesus Christ; by inviting him into our fouls; by offering our whole fouls to him; by embracing him, and loving him, with all our power. For he loves all them that love him; he is quickly found by all that feek him; and gives himfelf to all that give themselves to him. O happy exchange! Give then thyfelf, my foul, at all times, to this thy true lover, to this thy fovereign and infinite good; and he will communicate himself to thee. This kind of communion is not tied to time, or place; but will bring thy God to thee, whenever thou pleafest: and what canst thou receive, or defire, either greater or better?

Conclude to make a spiritual communion, every day of thy life; and even to repeat it often in the day; the oftner the better. This frequent repetition of acts of faith, love, and defire, will unite thee to thy fovereign good; fo that he will live in thee, and

thou in him.

### June 22.

#### ed to some On the Sacrament of penance. gi brautie

who, not content with instituting in our favour the facrament of baptism; for the forgiveness of all foregoing fins, and to give a new birth to our fouls, to make us his children; the facrament of confirmal milfion that is not restrained, as to time on place; not maker

every Day in the Tear

tion, to give us the Holy Ghoff in our fouls, to make us strong and perfect Christians, and soldiers of Christ and the facrament of the bleffed Eucharist, to feed, and nourish, our souls, to everlasting life, with the body and blood of Christ: has also considered our frailty and mifery, (by which we are so unhappily ha able to lofe the grace of our baptism, and to fall away from him by fin,) in the institution of the facrament of penance, for the forgiveness of the sins we fall into after baptism; as a plank, by which we may still escape to the happy shore of eternal life, after having, by mortal fin, fuffered shipwreck, and lost the treasures of baptismal grace, and innocence. Embrace, O my foul, this infinite goodness of thy God: adore, praise, and give thanks, to thy Saviour; for this his merciful institution. Alas! what must have become of thee, after for many fins, if he had not ordained for thee, this wholesome bath, of easy access, to wash away, with his own most precious blood, those stains of thine, which otherwise must have been the eternal fuel of hell's merciles flames?

2. Consider what this facrament of penance is, and of what extensive virtue and efficacy: we have the account of the institution of it, St. John xx. 21, 22, 23. Where he to whom all power is given, in heaven, and earth, was pleased to impart one branch of this power to his Apostles, and their lawful successors in the ministry, in these words. As the Father hath fent me, I also send you ---- Receive ye the Holy Ghost. whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them : and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained. This absolution of penitent finners, we call the sucrament of penance. And a facrament it is : because it is an outward sign of inward grace, even of the grace of the remission of our fins; by virtue of the institution of Fefus Christ, ascertained in the ample commission above rehearfed. A commission that comes to the church stampt with the broad feal of heaven, from him that has in his hands the whole power of heaven : a commission that is not restrained, as to time or place; not maker

makes exception of any fin whatfoever: provided the finner applies, with proper dispositions, to the power of the keys, granted by Christ to his church, St. Matt. xvi. O! how rich art thou O Lord in mercy! O how true it is that thy tender mercies to us, are over all thy works! The Angels committed but one fin, and that in thought only; and they were cast off, and condemned forever; without being allowed either time, or grace, to repent, of any means of forgiveness, or reconciliation: We fin again and again; and thou haft still a mercy in store for us, in this facrament of reconciliation. O may all heaven, and earth, give glory to thee, forever, for the wonders of thy goodness,

and thy love for us!

3. Consider that the sacrament of penance, besides. the absolution, given by the minister of Christ, in his name, and by his authority; requires also, on the part of the finner, contrition, confession, and satisfaction; at least, in defire: the absolution pronounced by the priest, will have no effect; it will only serve to the finner's greater condemnation, without those three necessary ingredients of this sacrament. Contrition is a hearty forrow for having offended so good God; with a full determination, by the help of his grace, not to be guilty of the like for the future. Confession is a full and fincere accusation of ourselves, as to the kind and number of our fins, to the pastors of the church, who have received from Christ the charge of our souls. Satisfaction is a faithful performance of the penance, enjoined by them for our fins, Christians, see upon what articles, you are to be admitted to a reconciliation with your Father, after you have gone away from him by fin. You must renounce, by fincere contrition, the husks of swine, which you have unhappily preferred before him : You must humble yourselves by a sincere and sorrowful confession to his vice-gerents, of your past errors and difloyalties: And you must offer yourselves to make all the satisfaction that lies in your power: And then he

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will receive you with open arms; as he did the pro-

digal Son. St. Luke xv.

Conclude to set a great value upon this sacred institution; and to have a speedy recourse to it, whenever you find you have fallen into sin. But see it be with due dispositions.

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## etad bods has a confession of our fins. The said and the confession of our fins.

ONSIDER first, that God always expected from finners an humble confession of their fins. This he prescribed in the old law, Numb. v. 6, 7, When a man, or woman, shall commit any fin that men commit, to do a trespass against the Lord, and that person be guilty, then they shall confess their fin which they have done. &c. This he ordained in the new law, by the very institution of the facrament of penance; which necessarily in-cludes, or presupposes, confession. This was signified by the ordinance of the law, Levit. xiii, and xiv; prescribing, that fuch as were infected with the leprofy, which was a figure of fin, should shew themselves to the priests, and be under their inspection, and direction. This was practised by the people that came to St. John the Baptist, St. Matt. iii. 6: and by the primitive Christians, disciples of the Apostles. Acts xix. 18, and St. James v. 16. This was always infifted upon in the church of God. And furely nothing could be more just, than that the finner should submit to the little humiliation, as some small atonement for the pride, and prefumption, by which he has rebelled against his God.

Confider 2dly, the many advantages, the foul receives from the catholick practice of humbly confelfing our fins to the ministers of Christ, whom he has tred up by all laws to a perpetual and indispensable fecrecy. It procures us proper medicines, and prescriptions, for all our spiritual maladies, which we here

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lay open to the physician of the soul; it furnishes us with counsel in our doubts, comfort in our forrows, and remedies against temptations: it gives present ease to the wounded conscience: it rectifies our errours; enlightens our ignorance; restrains our passions: It gives new strength of resolution, and courage to do better for the time to come: and, what is one of its greatest advantages, it humbles the soul, and teaches us to know, and to despise, ourselves. O what blessings are entailed upon this sacred institution of confession! O how much do these out-balance the momentary confusion, that may accompany the declaration of our sins.

Confider 3dly, that the principal advantage of an humble and forrowful confession of our fins is, that it is the means of divine appointment, for obtaining the absolution and remission of all our transgressions; and reinstating us in God's favour and grace; and this by virtue of the commission given by Jesus Christ to his ministers; with a folemn affeveration, that whatfoever they should bind upon earth, should be bound also in heaven; and that what soever they should loose upon earth, should be loofed also in heaven. St. Matt. xviii 18. O.! how happy would that criminal account himfelf, who should be allowed to escape the hands of human justice, by a forrowful acknowledgment of all his crimes in fecret to his judge, or to one appointed by his judge! But O! how much more happy is the penitent Christian, when, by an humble confession of all his fins, with a fincere repentance, to the minister of Jesus Christ, he is affured of being delivered, not out of the hands of men, that can only kill the body, and then can do more, but out of the hands of the living God, who otherwise will cast both body and foul into hell: and not only of being delivered out of the hands of divine justice; but of being received into the arms of his loving kindness; and made once more a friend, and a child of God, and an heir of his eternal kingdom.

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Conclude by giving thanks to the divine bounty cillation after fin; and annexed fo many graces and bleffings to it. But beware of abuling this most wholefome, and facred inflitution, by making it an occasion of finning more freely; or by using it only as a thing of course, or as an empty ceremony, without any true change of heart, of our roldmind it constituted a demonstration as an know, and to defaile, confeires. O what bief-

## one of contained June 24. noque believe sac and

On the nativity of St. John the Baptist.

I. CONSIDER how just it is, that we should fhew a particular honour and veneration to this Saint; of whom our Saviour tells us, St. Matt. xi. 18, that there bath not rifen among them that are born of women, a greater than John the Baptift. He was a burning and a shining light. St. John v. 35. The special friend of the bridegroom, chap. in. 20 ... Then Angel fent before his face to prepare his way, St. Mare. xi. To. A prophet, and more than a prophet, v. q. An Apostle fent from God, for a witness, to give testing many of the light, that all men might believe through him. St. John i. 6, 7. A martyr, in laying down his life for justice and truth. An hermit, in retiring from his childhood into the defarts, and there confecrating his days and nights to the exercices of devotion and self-denial. A zealous preacher of penance, to reclaim finners from their evil ways, and to prepare them for Christ. A virgin, by the perpetual purity of bis life. See here Christians, what we have to honour in this great Saint; what we have to embrace and love in him; and what lesions we are to learn from him, and to winds from the collection of the

20 Confider that, in other Saints, the church how to nours the day of their departure out of this transitory life; which the celebrates as their birth day: because, 100 on that day, they pass from this dying life here below; to their true life with God above, and are happily VOL. I. Kk

born there, where they shall never die. But, in St. John Baptist, we honour also the day of his birth into this mortal life, by reason of his being sanctified in his mother's womb, and of the wonders which accompanied his birth, which was to the world, fitting till then in darkness and in the shades of death, like the first dawning of the new day-light, which the Son of God, whose forerunner he was, was coming to bring amongst us. Therefore we rejoice in his nativity, as the Angel foretold, Luke i. 14, and glorify the author of all these wonders, by celebrating, with slove and gratitude, this birth of St. John, as a prelude of our redemption. See, my foul, if thefe betthy dispositions on this day one of olls tod ; find. 363. Confider that St. John was a Saint from his

birth? he always preserved his innocence, and wholly dedicated himself, from his very childhood, to the love and service of his Maker. To this end he retired, when very young, to the wilderness, to offy the corruptions and diffractions of the world : The abild grew, flays St. Luke, chap. i. 80, and was Brengthened in Spirit; and was in the defarts, until the day of his manifestation to Israel. Happy they that imitate this early piety of our Saint! Happy they that wholly confecrate themselves, from their tender years, to divine love! O! how good it is for a man, when he hath borne the fweet yoke of the Lord from his youth, Lament. iii. 27. O my foul, that we had been so happy! Let us begin now at least; and, from this moment, let us dedicate ourselves to be fervants of divine love, henceforth and forever, mybol

Conclude, if thou defireft to imitate the early piety, and innocency, of St. John, to follow him, as much as possible, into the wilderness; by retiring at least from the wicked ways of the world; from the infected air of the world; from the company and conversation of the flaves of the world; from the dangerous pastimes of worldlings: and from all the occasions of fin, to common in the world. And especially take care to make a private cell for thyfelf, in thy own interious:

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and to keep thyfelf there, by inward recollection, in a holy folitude with thy God. into this mortal life, by reak

in his mother's wonder and the wonders which accompanied his be 25 wants to the world, at a ting till then in darke is and in the lessons we are to learn from St. John his like ning till be some to learn from St. John his like ning till be are to learn from St. John his like ning till be are to learn from St.

the Son of God, w. MitgaBerunner he was was

coming to bring amon ONSIDER, that the defign of keeping the festivals of the Saints, is not only to honour God in his Saints, and to give him thanks for the grace and glory bestowed upon them, through Jesus Christ; but also, to encourage the faithful to an imitation of their virtues; in hopes of arriving one day at their bleffed company, by walking in their footsteps. If then we defire to keep the festival of St. John in a fuitable manner, we must endeavour to learn the leffons he teaches by his great example. His whole life in the defart was one continued exercice of prayer and mortification: thefe are deffons that all Christians must, in some measure, learn, that define to come to the eternal fociety of the Saints. If our daily occupations, if human frailty, will not allow us to have that continual attention to God, which Sti John had; at least, we must frequently and fervently aspire after him, in the midft of all our other employments and give, every day, a regular and competent time to the sholy exercice of prayer. If we cannot think of bringing ourselves to such hard diet, cloathing, and lodging, as his was: at least, we must daily retrench superfluities in eating, drinking, cloathing, sleep, and unnecessary diversions, we must mortify our vanity, curiofity, and fenfuality; and learn, on many occasions. to renounce our own will, to give up our own humours. and to contradict our darling inclinations, blow and to Confider the humility of St. John how mean an opinion he had of himfelf, how little regard he had to the efteem, and applause, of the world; how he freely and openly professed to the people, who had Kk2 the

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the highest opinion of him, that he was neither Christ, nor Elias, nor a prophet, but only a voice of one crying in the wilderness, &c, and unworthy of doing the meanest office to him, that was to follow him: how glad he was, when he saw himself decrease in the opinion of the world, and his glory eclipsed by the preaching and miracles of Jesus Christ. O blessed humility, which alone art capable of making any one great before the Lord! All other virtues are grounded on thee: without thee they degenerate into vices. Christians, let us study well this most necessary lesson.

3. Consider the zeal of St. John, for the glory of God, and his constancy in maintaining justice, and truth, without respect of persons, even to the laying down his life in the cause. He was not a reed shaken with the wind; he knew not what it was to flatter worldlings in their evil ways, or to comply, through human respects, with any thing contrary to conscience: he would not call evil good, nor good evil. He zealoufly preached to finners of all degrees, and conditions, the necessity of effectually renouncing their evil ways; and bringing forth worthy fruits of penance; he denounced the heavy judgments of God to the impenitent; and encouraged the penitent with the prospect of his mercy. Christians, let us attend to these lessons; which the Baptist so strongly inculcated, both by word and work. The God whom we worship is the sovereign justice and the sovereign truth: If then we would be Christians indeed, we ought, like St. John, to be willing to lay down our very lives, rather than to offend against justice and truth.

Conclude to walk in the footsteps of St. John, and they will bring thee to Christ. He was sent to prepare the people for him, and to direct them to him; attend to his preaching and to his example, and he will

do this good office for thee.

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On the preparation we ought to make for Confession.

I. ONSIDER that confession, without due difpolitions, will only ferve for our greater condemnation: fo that the great business of a sinner, that defires to receive fuch an absolution from his fins as may be ratified in heaven, must be to procure the necessary dispositions, by making a due preparation for confession. And as these dispositions must come from the giver of all good gifts: and the finner has removed himself to a great distance from him, amongs the husks of swine: the first part of his preparation must be to begin to turn towards God, with a great sense of the misery of his present condition, by servent prayer, and defire. The raifing up of a foul to life, which is dead to God by mortal fin, is, in effect, ne less a miracle of the divine power, than the calling of Lazarus out of his grave, after he had been four days dead and buried: there can be then no expectation of fucceeding in so arduous an undertaking, without taking him along with us, by earnest prayer, who alone can raise the dead. No: my soul, the most effential conditions of a good confession are a change of heart. and a perfect fincerity in the accusation of outselves! even of those fins which we are most ashamed of and who but God can change the heart of man; of bring him to overcome his pride, by a full confession of his shameful fins? Or how can so great a grace as this is, be procured without hearty prayer?

2. Consider that another necessary part of the preparation for confession, is to find out, by a serious examination, the true state of our interiour. Alas! 'tis one of our greatest missortunes not to know ourselves; and 'tis much to be feared, that many pass their whole lives under the guilt of mortal sins of pride, envy, hatred, detraction, of omissions of essential duties, & c Which, for want of a serious and impartial examina

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ion of the true state of their consciences, they neither confess, nor repent of, nor amend. Hence their confessions are null, their communions sacrilegious; they go on, all their life time, in their sins; and they die in their sins. O my soul, see this be not thy case: see thou labour in earnest to know thyself: see thou examine seriously thy whole interiour; that thou mayst be able to discover, by the light of God, which thou must implore, those lurking evils, which thy busy self-love, or the false maxims and practices of deluded worldlings, may otherwise disguise, under false pre-

tences, and hide from thy eyes.

3. Confider that the principal and most necessary preparation for a good confession, is true contrition; that is, a hearty forrow and detestation for our fins, by which we have offended fo good a God; with a firm resolution of a thorough amendment for the time to come; and of making the best satisfaction we can for our past offences. This is the most essential part, both of the virtue, and of the facrament of penance. This we must take the most pains about, when we are to go to confession. This we must labour to procure by ferious and deep confiderations, of the most moving truths, and by repeated and fervent, prayers: and never leave off knocking at the door of the divine mercy, till he is pleased to open to us; and to touch our hearts. Alas! none but he can bring forth the waters of true compunction out of these hard at pronounced in ockson

Conclude to be diligent in every branch of this neceffary preparation, as often as thou pretendent to make thy peace with God, by confession: lest otherwise, instead of obtaining a discharge, thou encrease thy dobt

have made God their frequest, that are lighting against him? He holds the thread of their life in his hands, which they are provoking him to break; and if he breaks it, in that moment they drop into hell. They have made themselves haves of the death; they are polfedied by him, and are at his there, who knows not what mercy is. Duath it always following them at the

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on motives of repentance. The die de og

I. CONSIDER the motives we have to repent for our fins, from the confideration of the filthiness of that ugly monster fin, and of its heinous enormity in a the fight of God. Mortal fin is infinitely odious to him. because infinitely opposite to his sovereign goodness, and to all his divine attributes. It is infinitely pernicious to our fouls; it makes them like very devils in the eyes of God. It robs us of divine grace, which is the true life of the foul; and of all our good: it is a poison, which, in a moment, brings prefent death; and condemns us to a fecond and eternal death. It is an evil fo black, fo odious, fo hideous, that hell itself has nothing worse. It leaves behind it a cursed stain, the perpetual fewel of the merciles flames of hell; which endless ages will never be able to efface. Alas! my poor foul, how wretched then has thy case been all this while thou hast been in fin! How ugly and abominable hast thou been in the fight of God and his Angels! For the foulest creature upon earth is a beauty in comparison with a soul in fin. Ah couldst thou but fee thyself as thou art, in this wretched state, the very fight would strike thee dead 1 O detest then this abominable monster, and spare no forth the waters of true company of it and an area

2. Confider the woes that are pronounced in Scripton ture against unrepenting finners, and the judgments of God that are perpetually hanging over their heads; and threatening them on all fides, both with temporal and eternal evils. Ah! what good can they expect, who have made God their enemy, and are fighting against him! He holds the thread of their life in his hands, which they are provoking him to break; and if he breaks it, in that moment they drop into hell. have made themselves slaves of the devil; they are polfeffed by him, and are at his mercy, who knows not what mercy is. Death is always following them at

death, is commonly the reward of their prefumption. Hell below opens wide her jaws, and is gaping to swallow them up: and thousands of them are daily going down into that bettomless pit, where the worm never dies, and the fire is never extinguished, St. Mark ix. 43. Ah who can bear everlasting fire! Who can endure to burn forever! Fly then, my soul, from fin. Detest that evil, which can, and will without repentance, condemn thee to hell.

2. Confider that fin makes a dreadful feparation between the foul and God; which is begun here, and extends to all eternity hereafter. You are not my people, fays he, Ofee i. o, and I will not be yours. Alas! the loss of God, which begins from mortal fin, is the very worst of all the ingredients of hell. Sin is a rebellion against this Sovereign Good: a blasphemous preference of Satan before him: a facrilegious attempt to rob him of his glory, and to divest him of his kingdom. It is murdering both the Son of God, and our own fouls. The folly and madness of it, as well as the monstrous presumption and treason, is infinite. O how much then does that evil deferve to be deteffed. which robs us of an infinite good, which otherwise should have been ours for all eternity; and brings us nothing in exchange, but endless and infinite evils?

Conclude to labour, with all thy power, to drive away fin from thy foul by penance: and God will re-

turn to thee, and be thine for ever.

## June 28.

#### Other motives of contrition.

found in fin. God is our first beginning, and four last end: he has given us our whole being, out of pure love, having no need at all of us: he has made us, and made us for himself; he has thought of us from all eternity; he has loved us from all eternity; and has

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prepared for us a happy eternity in the enjoyment of himself. In the mean time he is ever loading us with his benefits; his eye is always upon us; he preferves us from innumerable evils; all his other works are appointed to ferve us; his very Angels, by his orders, wait upon us: his own Son came down from heaven to redeem us. O reflect, my foul, on the particular obligations thou hast to his divine goodness! How he preferved thee in thy mother's womb, and brought thee fafe to the waters of baptism; where he washed thee from fin, made thee his child, and heir to his kingdom: how he gave thee an early knowledge of himself, and of his heavenly truths; how he favoured thee with many graces, and opportunities of good, beyond thoulands; how often he has admitted thee to his facraments; how he has borne with thy repeated provocations and treafons, for fo many years; and, notwithstanding all thy unworthiness and ingratitude, has been still thy constant benefactor. Alas! how many are now howling, and burning, in hell, for the like fins to those thou half fo often committed; and how mercifully has he, all this while, dealt with thee! O detest then this finful life thou hast hitherto led, and all thy past ingratitudes and, now at least, with thy whole heart : return to thy La God do bas

Consider, my soul, what thy sins have cost thy dear Redeemer, the innocent Lamb of God. His whole life was a continual suffering; but what dreadful torments did he endure for thee, in his passion and death Call over in thy mind the particulars of his sufferings, (which we have seen elsewhere) from his agony and bloody sweat, even to his expiring upon the cross; and learn, from that multitude and variety of torments, willingly endured for thy fins, how much he abhors find and how much he loves thee. For he had thee in his beheart all this while; and for thee he was weeping, and praying, bleeding, and dying: to teach thee to return blove for love, and to detest thy sins, which have crucismided thy God. See then what motives thou hast for consend one; where all smooth as beyond and written trition.

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3. Confider the innumerable motives we have to love God, and confequently, to detest our fins, as infinitely opposite to his divine goodness. He is infinitely good in himself, infinitely beautiful and charming; the overflowing ocean of all goodness and beauty, ravishing all that are to happy as to fee him, fo that they can never cease to love him. His mercy, his bounty, his wisdom, his truth, is infinitely charming: all perfections are infinite in him. No tongue can express, no heart can conceive, the incomprehensible greatness and multitude of his attractions. All created beauty and perfection quite disappears, and dwindles away to a pure nothing, when compared with him. He is infinitely good to us : the happiness of heaven consists in seeing, loving, and enjoying him. All our good is from him, and in him: he is our lovereign and universal good; the being of our being, the life and the light of our fouls. He is our Maker, our Redcemer, our Father, our Friend, our Spoule, our God, and our All. To love him is our greatelt benour, our greatest interest, our greatest pleasure ; it is the fource of all our happiness, both here and hereafter. All these reasons oblige us to love God: all these motives strongly call upon us to detest, and to repent, for our fins, because, by them, we have offended so good a

God, and said and an avoid for the foul the remittion of thy fins, to feek it by a repentance and contrition enlivened by love. Remember what our Lord and of that glorious penitent, St. Luke vii. 47, Many ins are forgiven ber, because she bath loved much. Go hou, in like manner, to the feet of thy Saviour, with penitential tears, proceeding from love, and he will propounce the like sentence in thy favour. I desimbs some house will be some and he will propose the like sentence in thy favour.

God. An ignorant fiftherman, as St. Peter was, feems indeed, no ways qualified to be a presider and teacher on the sand Gentiles, a founder of churches, an Apostle, and prince of the Apostles but then he was humble

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trition, from the remembrance of the passion of thy Sa-

God, and confedently to deten out fire we have to love opposite to the divide goodness. The is infinitely good

1. ONSIDER the wonders of God in these two glorious Saints? reflect what they were, before their being called by Jesus Christ, how admirably they were afterwards exalted by divine grace; and how per fectly they corresponded with divine grace, by their zeal, and by their labours; by their lives and by their death. The Wifdom of God came down from heaven, to build a house, to found a city, to establish a kingdom here upon earth, which faould be ever victorious over all the powers of hell; and should subsist, till time it felf should end. And see what choice he has made of men to be his principal instruments in this great work See, in the person of St. Peter, a poor, weak, illiterate fisherman, made the master-builder, under Chriff, of this house and temple, and, at the same time, the strong rock and foundation of it : fee him raifed to be the fir governor of this city; the prime minister of this king dom of God upon earth, St. Matt. xvi. 18, 19, and St. John xxi. 15, &c. O! how true it is, that God bath chosen the foolish things of the world, that he may confound the wife : and the weak things of the world, that he may confound the strong : --- and the things that are contemptible, and things that are not, -- that no fleto should glory in his fight, I Cor. i. 27, &c. O divine wisdom, how incomprehensible are thy ways; and how much exalted above the ways of men! O how do thefe thy dealings with us confound the proud, and comfort the humble ! d yall

Consider, in the person of St. Paul, another still more admirable instance of the power of divine grace, and of the incomprehensible wisdom of the ways of God. An ignorant fisherman, as St. Peter was, seems indeed, no ways qualified to be a preacher and teacher of Jews and Gentiles, a founder of churches, an Apostle, and prince of the Apostles: but then he was humble

and fimple; and fuch God usually chuses for the greatest things. But as for St. Paul, he was not only not qualified to be a preacher of the Gospel, but positively disqualified, by dispositions directly contrary to the humility and simplicity of the Gospel. He was a proud blasphemous Pharifee, a fiery zealot, a bloody perfecuter, a ravenous wolf, scattering, and destroying, the sheep of Christ, And yet he is made, in a moment, by a miracle of grace, a vessel of election, to carry the name of Christ before nations and kings, and the children of Ifrael: he is changed, in an instant, from a wolf into a lamb: he puts off at once the Pharisee, the blasphemer, the perfecuter; he lays down his own will at the feet of Christ; and has now no other passion but that of employing his whole life in propagating the name, the will, and the kingdom, of his God. O! here is a change of the right hand of the Most High! Here the wonders of God's power, wisdom, and goodness, shine forth much more brightly, than even in the raising of the dead to life.

3. Consider the lives of these two great Saints, after their call and election; their ardent zeal for the glory of their Lord; their unwearied labours in preaching, and propagating his kingdom; their constancy in a long course of sufferings; dying, in a manner, daily, for the cause of God; and, above all things, that divine love and charity which continually burnt in their breasts; which animated all their words and actions; supported them in all their labours and sufferings; kept them always in their interiour united to their God; and was daily growing stronger and stronger in them, till it made them victorious over death, and brought them to their live.

Conclude to give praise and glory to God, for all the graces and glory bestowed upon these two princes and work pillars of his church. Study to learn the great lesson they taught, both by word and work. But especially a learn of them the practice of divine love: nothing else of

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and simple; and such God usually chuses for the greatest things. But as for St. Or. 1. 3811 and only not qualified to be a preacher of preacher of the Color but positively dis-

ONSIDER the necessity of being fincere in the confession of our fins, if we hope for the forgiveness of them. All hypocrify, and double-dealing, in matters of this confequence is abominable in the fight of God. The prophet pronounces a curse against them that do the work of God deceitfully, Jerem. xlviii. 10. And furely they must be guilty, in the highest degree, of doing the work of God deceitfully, that go to confession with fraud and deceit; and, while they outwardly profess humility and fincerity, conceal, through the pride of their heart, and disguise, by lies, the guilt of their conscience. Ananias and Saphira were struck dead, by a visible judgment of God, for telling a lie to the Holy Ghoft, Acts v. And are not all fuch as are infincered in the confession of their fins, guilty, in like manner, of telling a lie to the Holy Ghost, whilst they seek to impose upon the minister of God, in this most solemn and facred function? They are guilty also of a grievous facrilege, as often as they receive absolution in this case, by their profaning the sacrament of penance: which facrilege is commonly followed by another still greater; by their making themselves also guilty of the body and blood of Christ, by an unworthy communion, and thereby receiving damnation to themselves. Good God preserve us from so heinous and so dreadful an evil!

2. Confider the difmal consequences of suffering one's felf to be imposed upon in such manner, by the father of lies, as to conceal any matter of moment in confession, either through shame, or fear, or pride of heart. Alas I to avoid a little prefent confusion, which would be immediately followed with the recovery of God's favour, with peace of conscience, comfort, and joy, what a bottomless pit of dreadful and endless evils does the fool cast herself headlong into! What inex-

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the difficultes, pants, and perplexicies is For fie has no fooner yielded herfelf up to the old ferpent, by this criminal concealment, but this dumb devil takes fuch possession of her, as to make her apprehend the confesfion of her guilt, more than either death or hell. Hence The goes on, adding fin to fin, facrilege to facrilege; butchered all the while by her own confcience; gnawed with a remorfe, which the feeks in vain to stifle; and carrying about with her a painful impostume in her heart, which never fuffers her to be easy. She deludes herfelf indeed, with vain purpoles of confessing fome time or other hereafter; but, in the mean time, her difficulties encrease, the devil daily acquires more and more power over her, and the grace of God is removed still farther and farther from her; till, at length, mercy abused gives place to justice, and, when she least expects it, the is cut off in her fins; and carries down with her the guilt of them all, to be confessed, too too late, in hell.

3. Confider how little reason there is for a penitent to be so much ashamed of the confession of his sins. Sin, indeed, is shameful; but the confession of one's fins is not fo. No: the humble confession of a finner gives glory to God; is honourable to the penitent himfelf; and affords joy to the whole court of heaven. And, as to the confessor, besides that he is tied up by all laws to an eternal fecrecy, and can make no manner of use of the knowledge he receives by confession, that can any ways be difagreeable to the penitent; he is to far, even in his own mind, from despising, or thinking worse, of the prodigal child, returning home by confesfion, or having less regard or affection for his penitent on that occasion; that, on the contrary, as he more clearly fees the hand of God, in the humility and fincerity of the confession, he rejoices in this happy change, he likes the penitent better than before, and conceives greater hopes of him for the future; and, thinking no more of what is past, he has a more tender regard than ever to a foul that has thus unbosomed herfelf to him. In the mean time, the penitent finds himself, in a man-

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having discharged his conscience of its load, and long the impostume that would not suffer him to be easy its Conclude to beware of the tricks of the father of lies, who hates nothing fo much as an humble confelfion, and therefore makes use of innumerable artifices to induce Christians to pass over, or disguise, at least, their fins, in the facrament of penance. Ah, how many thoufands of fouls has he deluded by these artifices, and drawn down into the bottomless pit! Alas! how easy it is for persons to be deceived in these occasions, who, in effect, have a mind to be deceived; and are willing, at any rate, to form to themselves a false conscience, by fome pretext or other, to spare themselves the shame of confessing their fins. See, my foul, this never be thy case: and therefore, whensoever thou findest a repugnance to confess any part of thy guilt, and a willingness to find some reason to dispense with thyself; befure to confess the sooner that which thou findest this repugnance to declare, for fear of thy being imposed upon by to be to much ashamed of the cosvol-last ro spirque

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## ERRATA in Vol. I.

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Page 6, line 5. Read.clean. P. 12. l. 1. Read kingdom.

P. 29. I. 7. Read Ferem. xii. 11.

P. 39.1. 8. For though, read thou.

P. 40. I. perultima. Read the fund.

P. 50, last line. Read and very. P. 90. 1. 14. Read Gal. vi. 7.

P. 104. 1. 19. Read Ecclus. xl. 1.

P. 105. l. 28. Read submit. P. 106. l. 10. Read comportment. P. 106. l. 10.

For 29, read 28. P. 112. l. 2.

P. 187. 1. 25. Read Matt. xxvii.

Read revealed. P. 229. l. 17.

P. 217. l. 26. Read another.

Read happy. P. 243. l. 11.

